

Kent on Sunday

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WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

North&West edition No 649



London and South of England Media Awards

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How PCC's publicity push will cost her office

IN THE run-up to the very first Kent police and crime commissioner elections, we sent reporters onto the streets around the county to find out if anyone recognised the candidates.

To the surprise of precisely no-one, there were lots of blank looks.

Little wonder, then, that when the polls opened, barely anyone actually trudged along to place their vote in the box.

So Ann Barnes faced a major challenge after her win. To make the role actually work she had to develop a profile and fast. And the best way to do that is, of course, by making headlines.

Unfortunately for her - and to the delight of her critics - she achieved that in a style more akin to a Marx Brothers movie than a carefully executed public relations campaign.

From youth commissioners to misjudged TV documentaries,



Editor **Chris Britcher**

she seemed to stumble from one PR fiasco to the next. Particularly ironic as she appears to have spent such a lot of public cash on PR consultants.

All of which means now she faces surely a near impossible job should she seek re-election.

More significantly, it has meant all the positive work she has done has been clouded by the negative.

Yet there is a strong argument that she sought the required profile needed to make the PCC role work; just that a blend of naivety and

perhaps pig-headedness has meant she has paid a high price. As a consequence, it is hard to see how either she - or the PCC role for that matter - can continue.

On our news pages we take a look at the latest installments in the great Ann Barnes saga.

Why not let us know your views by writing to our letters page? We'd love to hear from you.

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Youth commissioner role set to finally be scrapped

By Sarah Linney

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IT IS looking increasingly likely Kent police and crime commissioner Ann Barnes is to scrap the role of youth crime commissioner when current candidate Kerry Boyd steps down next week.

The role – designed to connect with the youth of the county – has been mired in controversy ever since the appointment of the first candidate, Paris Brown.

The Sheppey teenager was discovered to have made racist and homophobic tweets on her Twitter site. When exposed by a national newspaper, she was forced to stand down, and Mrs Barnes hit with a barrage of criticism.

Determined to deliver on her pre-election promise, her second appointment, Margate's Ms Boyd, 20, was seen as a safe pair of hands. But within weeks of her appointment last year, stories emerged about her relationship with a married Tory councillor.

Her one-year, £15,000 term, concludes in the coming days.

A spokesman for former teacher Mrs Barnes said: "At the moment no replacement has been lined up.

"Once Kerry has left the commis-

sioner will decide what to do."

In the same week it was confirmed Mrs Barnes would not face any charges for a car crash she was involved in (see story below), she spoke in defence of Ms Boyd's time in the role.

She said: "As well as hugely reducing the average age of my office, Kerry has worked really hard during her year with us seeking out the views of young people about our police in Kent.

"As Kerry heads off to return to her university course I am considering the best way of continuing our link with young people and making sure their views are heard – after all approximately 30 per cent of our Kent population is under 25.

"Initially I shall be getting together a group of representatives of those who either speak on behalf of or work with young people. I have an idea about the best way forward but I want to sound it out with young people themselves and those who have direct experience of working with them.

"I am absolutely convinced we need to continue to listen and hear and not just talk at and tell. Above all we need to encourage those groups of young people who are perhaps more reticent to do so, to come forward – they are our future."



OVER: Ann Barnes and Kerry Boyd - now the role may remain unfilled

...and Ann Barnes told she will face no charge following car smash

ANN Barnes has been cleared of any wrong-doing following a car crash she was involved in last year.

An investigation had been requested by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) following the smash on September 16.

Amid concerns over an insurance issue, the case was passed to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

In the crash in Dartford, Kent's police and crime commissioner hit another car and then a tree. Writing off her car.

The IPCC said: "It was our opinion that the PCC may have committed the offence of driving without insurance when she was involved in a road traffic collision on September 16, and on a number of occasions in the six months before."

But the Crown Prosecution Service said the case was "technical" and hinged on whether the journey was being made for business or leisure.

The CPS's decision not to push ahead with any case would suggest it

could not confirm any suggestion she did not have business insurance and was driving as part of her duties.

A spokesman said: "We would consider that far from clear. We were not provided with sufficient evidence that Ann Barnes drove the relevant vehicle on any other relevant occasion, which would be fundamental to considering the matter in terms of alleged criminality.

"We consider that it would not be in the public interest to prosecute."

An allegation that Mrs Barnes had obstructed a police officer was not passed to the CPS by the IPCC, which said there was "insufficient evidence".

Mrs Barnes said: "I have always maintained that so far as I was concerned, when my car was struck, I was appropriately insured.

"The insurance company has paid on the claim. I shall be making no further comment at this time, save to say that my office has achieved a lot, but much remains to be done."

Mrs Barnes was unhurt in the smash.

Street lights county council cabinet member resigns

ONE of Kent County Council's most senior cabinet members quit his post this week.

David Brazier was cabinet member for highways and transport at the authority and had been the man behind such controversial programmes as the decision to switch off street lights in certain areas in order to save money, and the introduction of the

Westgate Towers traffic scheme in Canterbury.

Cllr Brazier, who represents Sevenoaks North East for the Conservatives, looks set to be replaced by his deputy, Malling East Councillor Matthew Balfour.

A spokesman for Kent County Council confirmed Cllr Brazier had stepped down but refused to comment further on the issue.

Probe goes on into woman's hair set alight in McDonald's

POLICE are continuing to hunt for three men after a woman's hair was set alight in a fast-food restaurant in the centre of Canterbury.

The assault took place at the McDonald's in St George's Street at around 2am on Friday, February 20.

The victim said she was queueing for food when three men came in.

One of them is believed to have

set fire to her hair.

Det Sgt Barry Carr said: "Fortunately the fire was put out quickly and the victim was not seriously hurt, but things could clearly have turned out much worse.

"This was a nasty and extremely dangerous thing to do, and I urge anyone who recognises the men in the CCTV images to contact me as soon as possible."



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Row rumbles on over railway crossing future

MP JULIAN Brazier has heaped pressure on rail chiefs to do something to make a controversial rail crossing in Whitstable safer following the tragic death earlier this month of a 14-year-old schoolgirl.

Sacha Wheeler, a student at Simon Langton Girls' Grammar in Canterbury, died after being hit by a train on the Glebe Way crossing. Now the Canterbury and

Whitstable Conservative MP has written to the chief executive of Network Rail asking him to "make it clear" how it intends to prevent "further tragedies".

However, local resident Peter Cronin-Hill insists it should remain open.

He said: "It is used daily by people in the hundreds as a regular route. I implore the crossing remain open."



ROYAL: Duchess set for Kent visit

Pregnant Kate confirms trip to the seaside

IN WHAT is likely to be one of her final public appearances prior to giving birth to her second child, the Duchess of Cambridge will be paying a special visit to Margate in ten days' time.

She is expecting to give birth in April to a brother of sister of future heir to the throne George.

Prior to finishing her public appearances, she will head to the seaside resort on March 11.

There she will first visit the Turner Contemporary, visiting the Self: Image and Identity exhibition.

She will tour the gallery and meet artists whose works are in the exhibition.

The duchess will then meet school children involved in an art project at the gallery's Clore Learning Studio.

Following that, she will visit Resort Studios in Canterbury and view the work of a host of local artists.

A keen art fan, Kate has a degree in the history of art, obtained during his time at St Andrew's University.

The duchess' last visit to Kent was back in 2012. Then she visited a special project in Wrotham which saw inner city children come and enjoy the countryside on a camping visit at the Margaret McMillan House centre in Gravesend Road.

Ukip opposes fresh push to chase foreign drivers who speed on our roads

By Maria Chiorando

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UKIP MEPs have come under fire after they voted against new rules that would make it easier to punish foreign drivers for speeding.

Currently, foreign drivers caught speeding on camera cannot be fined because police do not have the power to trace people abroad.

Under new measures backed by the European Parliament, which will come into force in 2017, traffic chiefs would have the power to track down these motorists and fine them.

But Ukip voted against the bill, with Nigel Farage telling KoS: "It's very simple.

"We never vote to increase the body of power of EU law. There are no other reasons."

Conservative MP for Ashford Damien Green welcomed the new rules, saying: "Anyone who breaks the law should expect to face consequences.

"If you break laws in other coun-



LEADER: Nigel Farage

tries, you should expect to face the consequences there too.

"In Kent, we have had issues with foreign lorry drivers speeding and

breaking other road laws.

"The idea that these drivers can take responsibility for their actions will be very welcome news for many."

He was unsure of why Ukip may have voted against the bill, saying that 'they do many strange things.'

The department for transport said: "It's not right that foreign drivers have gone unpunished for speeding offences in the UK, and we are pleased this is set to change.

"But it mustn't be easier for British drivers to be prosecuted abroad than for foreign drivers to be prosecuted in the UK.

"We have made this clear from the outset of the negotiations."

The move was also welcomed by road safety campaigners.

Ed Morrow, campaigns officer at Brake, said: "For a driver who puts lives at risk to escape prosecution because their vehicle is registered in another country is both insulting and incomprehensible for victims.

"Illegal driving crosses borders, so enforcement must cross borders too."

Probe rules out fears of Jimmy Savile link

A REPORT into the extent of Jimmy Savile's sex offending appears to have ruled out earlier fears he had abused patients at St Martin's Hospital in Canterbury.

It follows claims by an alleged victim that he had been sexually assaulted by the disgraced late celebrity in 1969.

Known just as 'Mr S' he identified two staff members, and reported that one had taken him to the police station after the incident and the other was also assaulted by Savile, although this was not witnessed by Mr S.

An investigation by the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust was unable to contact the staff involved. It added it was "not aware of any allegations of assault made by either witness".

Its report read: "The KMPT investigation has found no evidence to connect Mr S with St Martin's Hospital in 1969 or to connect Savile with St Martin's Hospital."

Thoughtless parents park on gravestones

GRAVESTONES at a cemetery have been left damaged by parents parking to pick up their children - in one case breaking a memorial and leaving type marks over one of the graves.

Now council and school chiefs in Ashford are urging parents to think before they park.

It has received complaints about cars blocking the entrance to Willesborough Cemetery and certain individuals being rude towards people visiting graves and damage within the grounds.

The parents are picking up children from nearby Willesborough Infant and Junior schools.

The cemetery's low lying fence and grass area has been damaged by vehicles parking on the site. There have also been reports of a fragmented headstone.

Temporary signage has been installed at the entrance to prevent further damage to the cemetery.

School head Jennie King said: "We understand it may not be as convenient, but we ask parents to find an alternative place to park when picking up their children."

130,000 fines in first month of free flow

MORE than 130,000 fines have been issued to motorists failing to pay for the Dartford Crossing - with some 90 per cent of all journeys during December being paid for.

The figures were released this week in what was the first full month of the crossing having switched to the new free-flow system. Instead of paying at the toll booths, motorists must now pay within 24-hours of using the crossing by phone, online or by post. Or at one of a number of Payzone terminals in stores.

A total of 130,306 penalty charge notices were sent to drivers - with 73,898 payments being received. Some 18,000 tickets were issued to foreign drivers.

Highways Agency project director Nigel Gray said: "The vast majority of drivers are paying Dart Charge and each day this continues to rise. In particular, it's great that well over half a million drivers have registered for a Dart Charge account and are benefitting from discounted crossings."

For full details on how to pay, or to set up an account, see www.gov.uk/dart-charge or call 0300 300 0120.

agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Have your say on big change to boundaries

THERE is just one day left to have your say on plans to redraw electoral division boundaries.

Being conducted by the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England, it aims to reduce the number of county councillors to 81 - three fewer than there is now. Each

councillor should also represent a similar number of people.

Local people are being urged to have their input on the new division arrangements before it draws up its recommendations.

Max Caller, chair of the commission, said: "We will listen to every submission and then open another



phase of consultation on those proposals next May. Don't miss this chance to have your say."

Closing date is Monday. See www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk.

County Hall chiefs meet to discuss health issues

COUNCIL chiefs will discuss the latest Care Quality Commission reports into the health trust which oversees two of the county's major hospitals this coming Friday.

Kent County Council's health overview and scrutiny committee will meet at its County Hall headquarters in Maidstone to

discuss the findings of the health regulator's recent report on standards of Maidstone Hospital and the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.

The trust which runs them, the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, was told both 'required improvement' when the report was published.

...also

Online police Q&A hour

ASSISTANT chief constable of Kent Police, Rob Price, will join crime commissioner Ann Barnes in a live web chat at 6pm on Tuesday.

To take part in the one-hour Q&A, visit www.kent.police.uk/onlinemeeting.

Rail work disruptions

TRAVELLERS are warned of engineering work this weekend which may impact on their journey.

Work takes place at Deptford, Blackheath and Dartford between 6.40am on Sunday and 2am on Monday.

Grab your Blur tickets

FANS of Britpop band Blur will be snapping up tickets this week to the group's latest reunion show at London's Hyde Park.

The band feature guitarist Graham Coxon, who lives near Canterbury. Tickets for the June 20 show went on sale on Friday.

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County first home to the latest 'superfood'

Apparently packed full of antioxidants, is the aronia berry craze about to sweep the UK courtesy of a Sevenoaks farm?

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

A 'SUPERFOOD' described as the 'healthiest berry in the world' is now being grown in England - with the country's first plantation on a farm in a village near Sevenoaks.

Bringing aronia berries to our shores was the brainwave of farmer Andrew Tickle, who presses the fruit into a juice he calls Tickleberries, which he describes as 'a well-being product'. With high levels of antioxidants and vitamins, the fruit has been used for medicinal purposes in some parts of the world for many years (see box).

Despite the lack of track record the crop has growing in our climes, Mr Tickle was undaunted by the task of cultivating a successful harvest at his farm in Ash.

"I was specifically looking to grow a crop which fitted into a specialist niche market and that could flourish in poor soils, which we have here at

the top of the North Downs in Kent," he said.

"The soils on the farm are very heavy with lots of flint over chalk and so a hardy, woody plant with good roots was required, and we didn't want to grow an orchard, so the fact the berries grow on a bush was also a plus."

The berries, which are very popular in eastern Europe and the United States, as well as being used as medicine by Native Americans, have been grown in small batches in Scotland and Wales.

Mandy Smith, a spokesman for Mr Tickle who has helped market his growing empire, said the crop has grown well so far, with the first plantation established in 2011 and the first crop produced in 2013.

"Touch wood it will be good again. He had a good harvest last year," she said. "It seems to be a fairly robust crop. Because he's the only person growing them in England, there's been lots of interest in how the bush is growing, and how the plants are affected by bugs and the climate here."

"He did a lot of research first, and is

extremely passionate, but you never know how things in nature are going to work out until you do them."

Aronia berries are considered to be extremely versatile, and work in jams, jellies, desserts, yoghurts and smoothies.

They can be readily frozen, dried, powdered, chocolate covered or candied, and the various commercial uses include medicinal remedies, health and well-being nutritional supplements, natural cosmetics and diabetic energy foods.

Mr Tickle currently sells juice. "The berries have a very distinctive flavour," he says.

Ms Smith adds: "You wouldn't eat them raw - they have quite a sharp taste. They are already found in a number of products like pomegranate juice. They are also used a lot for food dye, as they are a dark colour."

"The juice itself is concentrated - you wouldn't gulp it down like orange juice, rather sip. It goes really well mixed with things like tonic, or other juices."

"We're obviously surrounded by lots of food producers in the county,



RIPE: If the crop is a hit it could spark success.

so we're looking at ways to incorporate the berries into other foods. We think they'd be good with cheeses, and in ice cream, for example.

"Andrew has also thought about making a jelly with the berries too, so that could be something that happens with them."

He uncovered the history of the berry's uses while undertaking market research, during which he was also stunned to discover that over 90 per cent of the general public were also

unaware of the existence of the fruit.

This despite the crop being widely grown in Eastern Europe and in America with a massive range of products already available on the market.

"The biggest problem at the moment is that people have never heard of the berries," he said. "Right now the challenge is to educate people and let them know the product is out there."

The company is a member of Produced in Kent, an organisation that

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CONFIDENT: Andrew Tickle is hoping for another big harvest. Pictures: Thomas Richards Photography & Getty

supports and promotes artisan producers of food, drink and lifestyle products in the county.

Jill Sargent, who looks after member services for Produced in Kent, is enthused about the originality of the product. "We have a reputation for growing a lot of traditional produce like apples in the county," she said. "So it's excellent that amongst the tradition, we also have innovation."

"When we first spoke to Mr Tickle about his plantation, it was a huge

learning curve for us too – we are really excited to see someone taking on a product that's so well-known in other parts of the world but isn't known here.

"Like good agriculturists do, he's spent a lot of time looking into growing the right produce in the conditions he has. It's quite an over-used term, the whole idea of a 'superfood' – but this is one, so to see the interest from other producers and chefs is fantastic."

BATTLE OF THE BERRIES...BUT WHY IS IT GOOD FOR YOU?

THE title of 'superfood' is one beloved of marketing departments and health shops. And after acai and goji berries the aronia berry is now stepping into the spotlight.

At around 10mm in diameter. They are known as black chokeberries in America.

The berry plants originate in America and were introduced into Europe in the 1950s.

The fruit is extremely high in antioxidants, which are said to have huge health benefits. Andrew Tickle explains it thus: "When the environment reacts with a plate of mild steel it will start to rust. Air reacts with steel and forms rust, the rust is damaging



over time and the steel has become oxidised. If left in the open the steel will continue to rust until it is destroyed. This is oxidation.

"Antioxidants have the potential of halting or slowing the rate of oxidation. In this example, a coat of

red-lead-oxide paint applied to the steel would slow the rate of oxidation; hence, when the steel is exposed to the environment it oxidises; the rust is the free radical and the paint is the anti-oxidant."



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Roadside testing for drug drivers to make our streets safer

A fresh bid to crack down on those who drive under the influence of drugs will roll out this week as new laws come into force similar to those used for drunk drivers. **Maria Chiorando** reports on what it will mean and how medicinal drug-use will be treated

DRUG driving legislation coming into force next week has sparked fears that people taking prescription or over the counter medications could be found to be driving under the influence.

But the new law (see box), which has been described as the 'biggest shake-up of drug driving laws for 85 years', should make it easier for the police to tackle those whose take to our roads and pose a risk to themselves and others.

It is estimated, nationwide, some 200 people are killed on our streets as a result of driving after taking drugs.

Coming into force on Monday, March 2, it will mean officers pulling motorists over can not only breathealyse them to check for alcohol, but also a host of recreational drugs.

That will include cocaine, cannabis, LSD, MDMA, ketamine, amphetamine, benzoylecgonine (a metabolite of cocaine that will appear in the blood after ingesting the drug) and heroin.

The results will be returned as swiftly as for conventional drink testing.

Gareth Johnson is Conservative MP for Dartford. He told KoS he was delighted to see the steps introduced.

He said: "Drug drivers are utterly selfish and have so often destroyed lives. This is why we have to use any means we can to tackle the issue."

"In the past, it has always been difficult for police to ascertain when someone's been driving under the influence – these new laws will help."

The penalties will be in line with those for drink driving which means if you are convicted you will receive a minimum 12-month driving ban,

a criminal record and a fine of up to £5,000 or six months in prison, or both.

According to the Department for Transport, the rules are designed to catch people 'who risk other people's lives by getting behind the wheel after taking drugs', and not those taking legitimate medicines that don't impair their ability to drive.

"For drink driving, you have powers to charge a suspect as soon as excessive alcohol is detected in the bloodstream," says transport secretary Robert Goodwill.

"But to charge a drug driving suspect you have to prove the driver is impaired, and that the impairment is caused by drugs. That's a matter of professional medical judgement, followed by a blood test. The process is open to challenge, and it is slow and expensive."

"The result is that a drug driver is almost 50 times less likely to be convicted than a drink driver."

"So we've brought in new legislation."

"It will no longer be a matter of judgement, but a testable fact."

Prescribed drugs that come under the new ruling include some anxiety medication and opiates used for pain control, some of which can be found in low amounts in over the counter medicines.

But driving chiefs are keen to point out that patients will be able to drive without fear of being prosecuted, as the majority of those taking medicines in accordance with the advice of a healthcare professional are unlikely to be above the specified limit and therefore will not be affected.

These motorists are advised to carry evidence of their prescription when they drive. Pharmacists, as

“Drug drivers are utterly selfish and have so often destroyed lives. This is why we have to use any means we can to tackle the issue. This will help”

Gareth Johnson,
Conservative MP for Dartford

well as doctors, can play an important role by telling their patients about the medicines they are taking.

MP Gareth Johnson says: "I don't believe we will have any significant problems with those taking prescribed medicine. When drink driving legislation was brought out,

there were a few issues that were bedded out in the courts – the message is people who do it will not be able to get away with it."

Professor David Taylor, a Royal Pharmaceutical Society spokesperson and member of the Department for Transport advisory panel on drug driving, adds: "Don't stop taking your medicines, prescribed or otherwise, if you are worried about this new law."

"Instead, talk to your doctor or pharmacist for information about how your medicines might affect your ability to drive."

"They'll be happy to give you the advice you need to stay safe."

Paul Watters, head of roads policy at the AA, believes the legislation could have a positive impact.

"We think around 200 deaths a year are caused by drug driving," he says. "It's hard to put a number on it though."

"Surveys we've done of our own members show that 53 per cent of those over 55 think drug driving is worse than drink driving, though this falls to 40 per cent in the 14-18 age group."

"The new legislation is a major step forward, and is something we have been calling for, and something we have wanted."

"Drugs, including prescription drugs can become part of a lifestyle – unlike drinking, when you're often aware that someone is doing it because they are in a social setting, people can be taking drugs without it being as obvious."

"Anything we can do to protect people who are dangers to themselves or others is a good step forwards."

A spokesman for Kent Police said the force will not be commenting on the new laws until they are in place.

WHAT WILL TEST CHECK FOR?

THE new drug driving legislation comes into force from Monday, March 2, in England and Wales.

Transport secretary Robert Goodwill says: "Over the past 50 years, road deaths due to drink driving have been slashed by more than 80 per cent."

"But one of the big challenges for the next few years will be to clamp down on drug-driving in the same way."

The illegal drugs covered by the legislation are cocaine, cannabis, LSD, MDMA, ketamine, amphetamine, benzoylecgonine (a metabolite of cocaine that will

appear in the blood after ingesting the drug) and heroin.

The prescription drugs covered are clonazepam, diazepam, flunitrazepam, lorazepam, oxazepam, temazepam, methadone and morphine.

According to the Department of Transport, the limits that have been set for these drugs exceed normal prescribed doses, meaning that the vast majority of people can drive as they normally would, so long as they are taking their medicine in accordance with the advice of a health-

care professional and/or as printed in the accompanying leaflet and their driving is not impaired.

Mr Goodwin said: "We've set the levels as low as we reasonably can. Low enough that one smoke of cannabis is likely to put an offender over the limit."

"But just high enough so suspects can't claim – for example – that drugs were inhaled accidentally."

"And if drivers start turning to other drugs, we can put them in the regulations and set limits for those, too."

CAUGHT: Drug use by drivers can now be tested at the roadside



BUILDING: Elements of the benefits system are becoming one

Opinion still split as big changes to benefits system is rolled out

Universal credit sweeps in to a host of authorities in the coming weeks. [Sarah Linney](#) finds out more

IT HAS been slammed as a failure, criticised for being “staggeringly” behind schedule and even blamed for encouraging domestic abuse.

Like just about every attempt to overhaul the benefits system, universal credit has been dogged by controversy.

Universal credit is a new method of paying benefits. It replaces the six main benefits and tax credits available at the moment to people who are unemployed, and is being rolled out across the country. This month, it comes to Maidstone and Swale – with Ashford to follow suit in April. It will be across the nation by 2017.

So how will universal credit differ from what we have now – and what effects will it have?

The plan is for it to replace income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, income support, working tax credit, child tax credit and housing benefit.

People will receive a single monthly payment, paid directly into their bank account, so that financially, being on benefits is more like being in work, when most people are paid monthly.

It is also simpler than the old system, and hopefully easier for the claimant. For a start, whereas before, you were either entitled to or not entitled to a certain benefit, now the amount you are entitled to will go up and down each month depending on how much you are earning. And you will be able to work as many hours a week as you like.

The system will be linked to HM Revenues & Customs (HMRC), so your benefits can be adjusted for you according to your earnings. One potential drawback, though, is that applications usually have to be made online.

The government also claims that

Jobcentre advisors will make more effort to help people back into work, rather than just checking the legitimacy of their claim, and jobseekers are expected to make a concerted effort to look for work.

Graham Galpin, Ashford Borough Council's Conservative-run cabinet member for finance, resources and procurement, says he believes the system has a lot of benefits.

“At the moment,” he explains, “if you have a few days' work you have to sign off, then sign on again and wait for the whole system to crank up. Now you won't have to do that – the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will know you've earned a bit of money.”

“The level of your claim can reduce as your earnings increase. You won't lose your benefits and have to start all over again if you have a part-time job – your benefits will just come down.”

“It's giving people back a degree of control.”

Support organisations will also be at the Jobcentre to assist.

“We want to deal with the barriers that are stopping people getting to work, from mental health to accommodation problems,” Cllr Galpin said.

“We are trying to focus on the whole person.”

“We don't believe people are scroungers looking for an easy life. There is no single issue stopping people from working. Often people who are long-term unemployed have lost a lot of confidence.”

“It isn't a covert way to cut benefits, it's an overt way of helping people into work.”

But the changes have been heavily criticised, partly for the speed of their implementation – and partly because of the extra responsibility it is heaping on the shoulders of those out of work to now manage a monthly



BUDGETS: New system brings with it a host of fresh challenges

budget. Something many have not had to do for years.

Previously, for example, housing benefit would be paid directly to the landlord – ensuring the roof over your head was covered. Now, the new scheme will see the money paid to the household and they will be expected to ensure the money is spent on the key bills.

Only if it appears your home is under threat would steps, in exceptional circumstances, be taken to channel money directly to your landlord. But the risk of accidentally mismanaging funds is clearly there.

The Town and Country housing association, which provides 9,000 affordable homes across Kent, Sussex, Surrey and south London, has been encouraging tenants on housing benefit to pay a small sum each month to ensure they have saved a month's rent in advance to ensure their homes are never at risk.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Children's Society and Disability Rights UK all published research suggesting that the changes would leave vulnerable people worse off – including, according to Disability Rights UK, up to 230,000 severely disabled people who do not have another adult to help look after them, who could lose up to £58 a week.

It was even suggested by domestic violence charity Refuge that proposals to pay benefits to one member of a couple could make it easier for controlling partners to deny their victims access to money.

And Gordon Cowan, Labour leader on Kent County Council, said he thought the changes would lead to people being worse off.

“People need different benefits depending on their circumstances,” he said.

“And if the jobs are not there then they need their benefits. The vast majority of people want to work, but there isn't the work out there for them and it's not fair to cut benefits just because there aren't jobs for people to take up.”

“They say the economy is turning around, but go out to the public and ask them whether they are better off now, whether there are any jobs.”

He said the solution to making work pay was not to cut people's benefits, but to pay people a wage they could live on.

“We are all trying to get everybody off benefits and back into employment, and we know there are problems with the system and people have been better off at home – but you must give them a living wage,” Cllr Cowan said.

“If you do that, they will go out and work. And that's how the welfare bill gets cut without getting everyone in a corner and saying if you don't go out and get a job we will cut your benefit.”

“Otherwise, if we don't look after people while they are on benefits, all

you do is move the burden onto other areas, and the cost of dealing with them will be more. If people are not eating or not living healthily, they will have problems with their health and the cost is pushed onto the NHS.”

Hannah Patton, the Green Party's prospective parliamentary candidate for Maidstone and the Weald, shared Cllr Cowan's concerns.

“Some people will be better off, but there are concerns that a lot of the most vulnerable people will get less money, and that lots of people will get in more financial trouble,” she said.

“The most vulnerable people are the big concern for me, because they don't necessarily have the ability to get their voices heard.”

“I'm also concerned that everyone has to do everything on the computer. If you are not computer literate, that's going to be really isolating.”

She said society needed to view people who were receiving benefits differently.

“In recent times a lot of people have been made redundant. And the point of benefits is to support them and get them back on their feet,” Ms Patton said.

“We have a really skewed culture in this country, where people think people are scroungers. It's a basic need that people need financial support when they are in a bad place. You don't choose to make yourself redundant.”

“Work is such a big part of people's lives, and when it goes away it's not just about lying on the sofa. People get depressed and it can affect their families. It is soul destroying, and the longer you are unemployed, the worse it gets.”

“There needs to be better careers advice, better money management training for people who are on benefits, and more support around getting people back into work.”



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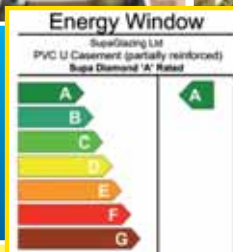
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Getting a home education... a master stroke or big mistake?

Just like attending school, giving your children a home education can be a rather hit or miss affair. A chance to break the system, but also one which can deny them vital social interaction.

Sarah Linney looks at the pros and the cons...

DEPENDING on your point of view, your school days were either glorious golden days packed with friendships and adventures, or a necessity which you'd rather have forsaken.

Regardless of which side you came down on, few can not have just occasionally pondered what it would be like not to attend – and instead be taught at home.

And for more than 1,000 children in Kent, it's a reality. What's more, that number is increasing too.

But is it a sensible approach in a climate so dependant on recognised qualifications and a broad academic spread?

Some 793 children in the county were registered as being home educated in 2008. By the school year 2013 to 2014, that number had increased by more than 50 per cent to 1,326.

Out of an estimated 200,000-plus schoolchildren in Kent, that's only about one child in 200 being taught at home. But still, it's big enough for the county council to need to take notice of.

"For some people it may be a matter of personal or religious convictions; others will have had a bad experience," explained Roger Gough, Kent County Council's cabinet member for education.

"The number has risen quite significantly in the last few years, and as the numbers are rising we are seeing quite a few children who are dropping out at the later stages, Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4."

Lesley Herriot has nothing against school. She sent her son there. But when her daughter was in the second year of secondary school, Mrs Herriot felt she would be better off at home – and removed her.

"It was a very easy decision to make," she said. "I Googled home education, to see what I could find, and I found thousands of websites and resources."

"It made me feel I was not the only one. I made the decision, and I have never regretted it."

A founder member of South East Home Educators, Mrs Herriot says home education works differently for everyone.

Parents aren't obliged to follow the national curriculum or even enter their children for exams.

"Mostly what we did was autonomous and verbal – it worked better for us," she explained.

"No two people do it the same. Some people do school at home and some people follow the curriculum. We didn't. We focused on life skills. Just something like going shopping covers home economics and maths."

"We would go for walks, we would go to



HELP: East Kent College's Sara Woodward believes it is essential children have social opportunities.

places and look at the history of the place, how it was built, the geology and geography of the land. You learn so much from TV programmes like the Discovery Channel and the National Geographic, and the internet is marvellous.

"In life you are learning all time. Think about the subjects you cover without realising when you are just talking to your friends.

"Sometimes we would pick a topic and look at it, and we would use workbooks sometimes, for example for maths. We ignored science, though."

Despite her decision to excise a core subject, she says the county council was happy with the education her daughter was getting – and she is now at university.

"I went to Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School, and how much of what I learned at school did I ever use afterwards?" Mrs Herriot said.

"With home education you can follow what you like. You can follow the things you are interested in instead of what someone says you are interested in. And you haven't got the distractions of someone playing up in class or not liking the teacher.

"If you are deeply involved in something, you don't have to stop after an hour. You can carry on for the next 36 hours if you want.

"We didn't work set hours, it was 24/7. We took no notice of school hours, timetables or terms. And you can take exams at any time in your life, it doesn't have to be when you're 16."

One of the big questions has always been how being educated at home, away from their peers, affects a child's social development?

This is where groups like South



HOME: Many parents feel a home education allows them to use real life to shape their children.

East Home Educators - one of the biggest groups in the country, with almost 500 members from Kent, Sussex, Surrey and some parts of outer London – come in.

The group organises regular activities for its members, ranging from football, trampolining, adventure play, t'ai chi and ice skating to trips to London theatres and museums.

"There is more socialisation than people imagine," Mrs Herriot said.

"It's not like school, where you're with children of your own age. They socialise with children of all ages, and as they get older they don't regard adults as aliens.

"When my daughter went to university, she managed fine as she had always been with lots of people."

And her advice for anyone considering taking their child out of school is not to be afraid – and to contact her if they need any advice.

"Home education has become more well known: the more people take their children out, the more people see it working," she said.

"There are very few people it doesn't work for. I've come across

thousands of families, and probably less than one per cent haven't coped with home education.

"Like everything in life, some things suit some people and some things suit others, but there is always the option to go back. Nothing is set in stone – what you decide to do now can always be changed."

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However, all is not necessarily entirely rosy in the garden of home education all the time.

Most home-educated children are removed from, or not sent, to school by parents for whom it is a considered decision and who are confident they can teach their child themselves.

But there are other instances in which a child is removed from the school system and simply left without an education at all – and, says Roger Gough, the number of such children appears to be increasing.

"We recognise it's a parent's right to make the choice not to send their child to school. Education is compulsory, school is not, and many of them deliver on it extremely well," he said.

"But there seem to be quite a number of adolescents with a poor attendance record who drop out of the system, and they are quite a different group."

Ideally, parents who teach their child at home would register this with the county council.

But they do not have to, and many do not – meaning that the county council does not actually know how many children are being home-educated. Mrs Herriot estimates that the true number could be double the official figure.

"Once you have gone into the school system, if you leave it to be home educated, there will be communication between the school, the home and the council. But a child could never come into the school system at all," Cllr Gough explained.

"By and large, we think it's a good thing if we have some contact with parents who are home-educating their children. It is part of our role to

be able to offer help, advice and support if they wish to have it, and we have people who will meet with and visit families, although we can't insist on that.

"If the children are coming out during the adolescent stage, and have had problems around behaviour and attendance, we would be more keen to ensure that we were able to engage with those families as those are the instances where, in practice, they may be missing education."

If the council has reason to believe that a child is not receiving a proper education, it will take action and can compel the child to attend school.

"Where there is a history with the children that would give reason for concern, we will propose a meeting. If that meeting is not agreed to, we can put them on the Children Missing Education register," Cllr Gough explained.

"If a child is of school age, it's the duty of the parent to ensure their education is suitable, and we have a duty to intervene where we have reason to believe that a proper education is not being provided.

"But there could be a situation where it is not known. We can't go round just looking on spec – there would have to be a way by which someone brought the issue to our attention, for example a neighbour.

"A school attendance order is the nuclear option. There would be other things to do not to get to that point. We want to work collaboratively with those families and have a voluntary return to school."

East Kent College, which has campuses in Broadstairs, Folkestone and Dover, works with a growing number of children who are not in the school

system to provide them with education, under a programme funded by the government.

The college's director of 14 to 19, Sara Woodward, works closely with the county council to identify young people who would benefit from tuition.

Some students just come to do GCSEs or Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths, studying for six hours a week. But the college encourages them to do more and some take up part-time vocational courses.

"We see a large number of students. I am dealing with one or two inquiries a day," said Ms Woodward.

"We had about 15 students last year and we have about 20 this year.

"It's critical that we give young people who need it a lifeline to being back in a social environment. Some of them are very lacking in confidence and need to be back with their peers.

"It's really just about giving them time to settle and become part of a group – about structured learning and confidence. It is not a big income area for the college, but it's an important area that we can develop."

She stresses that home education can work extremely well in many cases.

"There are children whom it suits, and whose parents are motivated. They can take their children outside the formal curriculum and teach them in a different way, according to their individual needs, and help them grow," Ms Woodward said.

"You can follow a really exciting and motivating curriculum in the comfort of your own home. There are often strong networks which mean the children don't become socially isolated – they meet up with other

MISSING: Does a home education leave your child missing key benefits of school such as making friends?



families and they do activities together."

But she says that in other cases it doesn't work well – with potentially disastrous results.

"Some children don't want to be taken out of school, and some children don't get the quality of education that they need," Ms Woodward said.

"Some don't appear to get very much education at all. In one or two cases we have had young people with

extremely low levels of learning – we had a 15-year-old with the literacy level of a six-year-old, although this is absolutely not the norm.

"Some children who have particular emotional and learning needs, or who do need specialist teaching, are not getting it and are in danger of becoming very socially withdrawn by the time they are 14 or 15.

"We should have mechanisms for identifying vulnerable young people in those situations."

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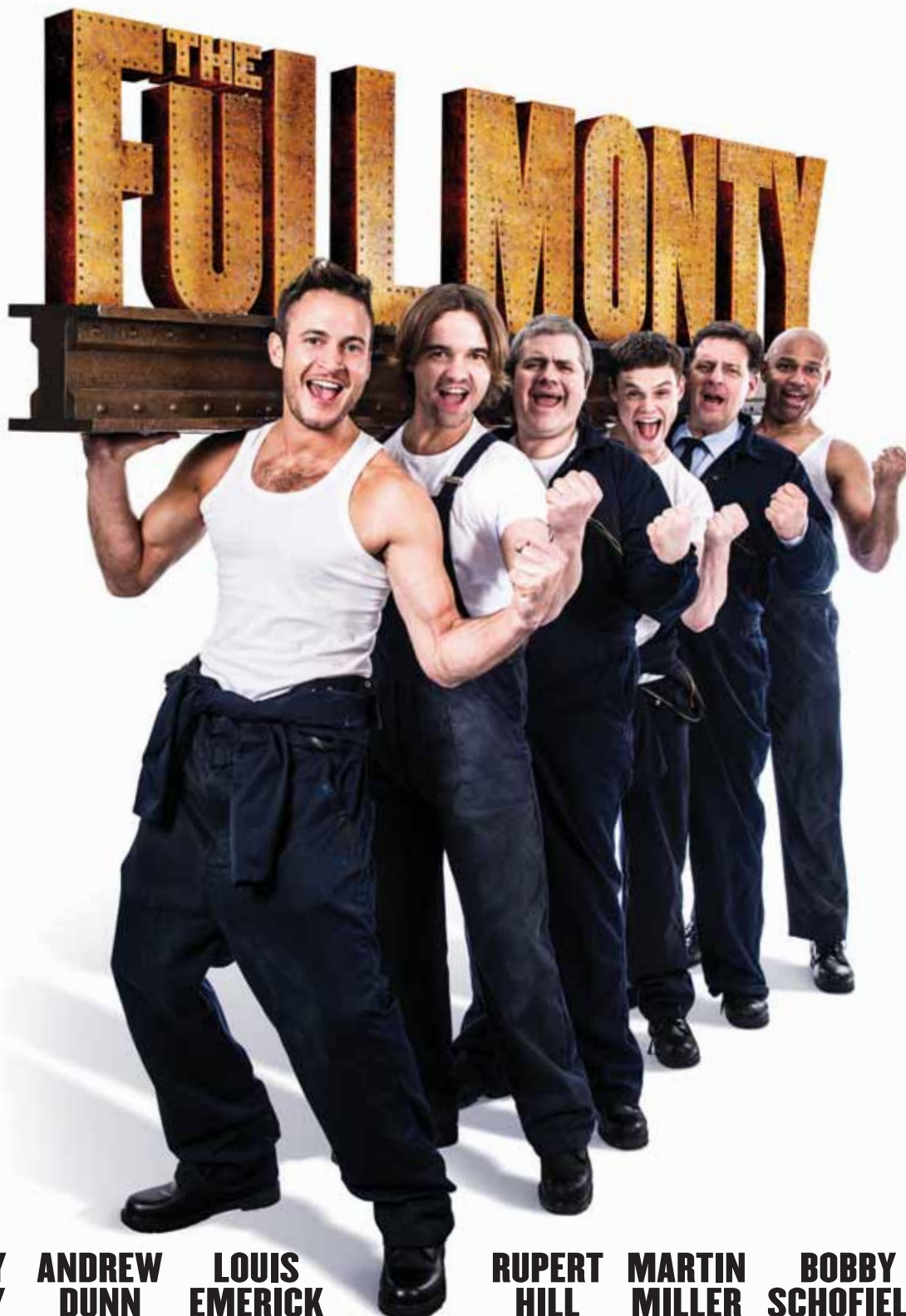
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CANDIDATES

Full list of confirmed candidates:

Julian Brazier (Cons)
James Flanagan (Lib Dem)
 Jim Gascoyne (Ukip)
Stuart Jeffery (Green)
 Hugh Lanning (Lab)
Robert Cox (Socialist)

HISTORIC:

The Tories have held power in the city for almost a century

Tories stand strong behind city walls

Jamie Weir continues our guide of every Kent constituency

WITH a Unesco World Heritage Site at its heart and two main universities within its boundaries, Canterbury's electoral constituency has significant variety to its offering.

What lacks variety is the political party which has been voted into power since the constituency was first created in 1918.

What's more, there's absolutely no suggestion the Conservatives are in any danger of losing in 2015.

Incumbent Julian Brazier, has held power as the constituency's representative in Westminster continually since 1987. At the last election, the Dartford-born MP took a majority of 6,048 – and a comfortable 44.6 per cent share of the vote in a constituency that also embraces Whitstable and a host of outlying villages.

What presents a more interesting battle is the one for second place. Normally a scrap between Labour and the Lib Dems, Ukip's influence may see it look to muscle in.

The 2010 election saw Labour's vote collapse as it went from securing nearly 30 per cent of the vote in 2005

to nearly half of that five years ago.

Ukip beat the Greens into fourth in 2010, it would not be unrealistic to see them grow that vote considerably given the general lack of engagement with both Labour and the Lib Dems.

The candidate standing for Ukip, Jim Gascoyne, says he thinks it will, and what's more, he's confident that Ukip policy will prove popular with the electorate.

He said: "The electorate, right now in Canterbury, are being ignored, and they, like me, are fed up of it. They have an MP who, in between elections, disappears from local view, and a council that has been neutered by Westminster and is pushing through all sorts of plans the people don't want.

"That means restoring democracy in the constituency would be my top priority. Actually representing people is what I want to do, and that, frankly, is not something which is happening right now.

"The sitting MP distances himself from local government. That would not be the case with me. I see the Ukip councillors at Canterbury council as colleagues, and rather than distancing myself from them, and the electorate, I would want to spend my time working with them."

Ukip are no mugs to drag the local authority into the argument. There is something of a backlash over the Tory leadership of the city council following a host of controversial decisions - most notably over housing and roads.

The approach to local politics is something which Liberal Democrat candidate, James Flanagan, also takes aim at.

He told KoS the public deserve more time with their MP to ensure that local issues are heard.

Mr Flanagan said: "A lot of trust has been lost, as the current MP has chosen to ignore many local issues. As a councillor on the city council, I have worked alongside residents to campaign on issues which the local public are interested in. On one, the Kingsmead Field, which was proposed for development, I worked to oppose the development with people in the area, where the local MP said it would be 'unconstitutional' for him to get involved.

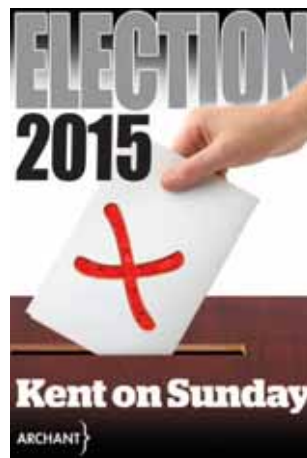
"He has also chosen to ignore public anger with the excessive development proposed by the local plan."

The Liberal Democrats have, traditionally, been strong on the city council. They remain the main opposition party. Yet even the most optimistic party activist would expect to see its share of the vote increase.

Dissatisfaction nationally will most certainly have an impact.

Disillusioned left-winger may, instead, turn to the Green Party, which will be represented in Canterbury by the high-profile Green activist Stuart Jeffery at the general election.

He told KoS that the constituency faces many similar pressures to other



parts of the county, with housebuilding one of the key issues.

He said: "In Canterbury we're facing two competing pressures. Excessive greenfield development, and a rise in the need for affordable housing provision for young families. I would do my best to ensure that brownfield sites were being redeveloped and affordable housing was provided for those who need it.

"Over 25 per cent of workers in Canterbury receive less than the living wage. That's something which we would look to change straight away. The Green Party are proposing a minimum £10 per hour wage to combat poverty which many places in the country are facing. In a reasonably affluent constituency like Canterbury, I am appalled that over a quarter of jobs pay less than the living wage."

The living wage is an issue which the Labour Party candidate feels is rising in importance too.

Hugh Lanning told KoS the national drive for austerity has left people struggling to make ends meet – something he wants to fight against in Westminster.

He told KoS: "Reducing inequality is key to what I would bring to the area. The drive for austerity has left a number of people with much less in real term income, and having to make impossible decisions about how to spend what little they have. There is a growing gap between the rich and the poor, and we have got to do

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Past general election results for Canterbury:

2010

Julian Brazier (Con) - 22,050 (44.8%)
 Guy Voizey (Lib Dem) - 16,002 (32.5%)
 Jean Samuel (Labour) - 7,940 (16.1%)
 Howard Farmer (Ukip) - 1,907 (3.9%)
 Geoff Meaden (Green) - 1,137 (2.3%)
 Anne Belsey (Money Reform) - 173 (0.4%)

Majority: 6,048 (12.3%)

2005

Julian Brazier (Con) - 21,113 (44.4%)
 Alex Hilton (Lab) - 13,642 (28.7%)
 Jenny Barnard-Langston (Lib Dem) - 10,059 (21.1%)
 Geoff Meaden (Green) - 1,521 (3.2%)
 John Moore (Ukip) - 926 (1.9%)
 Rocky van de Benderskum (Legalise Cannabis) - 326 (0.7%)

Majority: 7,471 (15.7%)

MP: Julian Brazier



Continued on Page 20



GREEN: Stuart Jeffery

kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk



UKIP: Jim Gascoyne

NTW

Week ending March 1, 2015 **19**

something about closing it now, before it gets worse. Austerity hasn't helped Canterbury, and I want to see it gone, and prosperity back on this area's agenda."

But Julian Brazier takes a far more upbeat approach - and is convinced the economy is bouncing back.

He told KoS: "The economy has turned around nationally, and in Canterbury. We now have greater numbers of people in work than ever before, and growth."

"What will be key going forward is maintaining momentum for economic growth. As a result of the work the Conservative government has done, we are starting to see living standards rising, alongside wages and job opportunities."

"Those are all positive, and I think that economic prosperity is likely to be one of the key issues at the forthcoming general election."

But it's not just inequality which Labour candidate Mr Lanning is concerned about. He is also a passionate advocate for the NHS, telling KoS that in his view, it is one of the prime issues for the next election.

He said: "The NHS remains a huge concern for me. I want to work to ensure that we have a free, fair, high quality health service, which is well funded enough to serve the public."

"Ensuring health care, and in particular the hospital in Canterbury get the support and funding they require, is a fundamental priority for me."

That is a sentiment which Green Party candidate Stuart Jeffrey agrees with, telling KoS that tackling failures due to inadequate funding in the NHS is important to the electorate.

KOS PREDICTS...



IN 2001, with Tony Blair a shoe-in for another big election win, there was a chance the Tories could lose Canterbury. But with the Lib Dems refusing to give ground for Labour, Brazier held firm, albeit by a mere 2,000 votes

It seems inconceivable they will get so close again. Ukip may pick up votes and the Greens may well prove the biggest surprise. As for the Lib Dems and Labour? No chance.

Mr Brazier insists he shares those concerns.

If elected again, he said he would seek to clamp down on health and benefit tourism to ensure that services were not over stretched. And in a nod towards those with Ukip sympathies, agreed he felt immigration and Europe had been piling pressure on the country's infrastructure.

Maidstone: Grant to flood back in?

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

Poor old Jasper Gerard. For years, he has been working towards raising his profile and building up a supporter base in order to present a real challenge to Helen Grant, the Conservative incumbent.

But after a slow burn that made him a familiar face and name, the Lib Dems decision to go into Coalition, and the perception of the party ever since, has had the same impact as dropping a grenade



FIGHTING: Jasper Gerrard

CANDIDATES

Full list of confirmed candidates:

Gary Butler (Eng Dem)
Hannah Patton (Green)
 Allen Simpson (Lab)
Eddie Powell (Ukip)
 Helen Grant (Con)
Paul Hobday (NHAP)
 Jasper Gerard (Lib Dem)

into the Jasper Gerard tank.

In short, it has effectively destroyed any hope he once had. And it was always going to be a long shot.

Helen Grant has had a sometimes uncomfortable relationship with her local constituents due to a flurry of troublesome headlines.

But her swift rise up the Westminster ranks has been impressive. And now, finally, she seems much more at ease with herself and her own abilities.

A shoe-in once again, it seems, she vows there is no complacency in her campaign.

Mrs Grant said: "This is probably the most important election in a lifetime. I urge people to vote and help decide the direction of our country for the next five critical years."

"I truly believe that a vote for Cam-

eron is a vote for competence. A vote for anyone else could lead to a Miliband government and a coalition of chaos."

Mrs Grant says that there are a number of key issues for the constituency which may sway the vote.

The obvious one of these is work on flood defences - something Mrs Grant has made a priority since the severe flooding in Yalding over the 2013/2014 winter.

Housing has also been a major issue as the Maidstone local plan - which sets out the borough council's development priorities - has been introduced to the public.

Mrs Grant has proved a vocal critic of the scale of greenfield - undeveloped land - and agricultural land being proposed for development.

Jasper Gerrard agrees with her stance.

He has also been fighting against the level of housebuilding in what he calls the 'wrong' places in the borough.

He said: "Housing has been a huge issue in the area, with a tremendous amount of concern from people who will have to live with what is an immensely damaging local plan."

"The very fact that the current MP's own party, at a council level, has been pushing through more

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KOS PREDICTS...

THIS is likely to be a seat where the full impact of smaller party influence will be felt.

Helen Grant will almost certainly win again for the Tories, yet disillusioned voters from Left and Right have a variety of options here and that could make for an interesting outcome. When once a win was the aim, the Lib Dems will now be fighting for second and it's achievable here.



housing shows how sincere her campaigning against housebuilding is."

Green Party candidate Hannah Patton has similar views, telling KoS that housing is a critical issue, but that other solutions should be explored.

She said: "Bringing empty homes back into use like our MP has done in Brighton would help, as would exploring brownfield sites. We also want to see small scale energy generation, with renewables on more of our public buildings to ensure we have enough in the future."

But what of the rise of Ukup?

Lib Dem Mr Gerrard says he'd be willing to bet his mortgage that the party will come at least second in the election, saying that smaller parties like Ukup could actually help split the Tory vote to his advantage.

It may just prove his only hope. A Lib Dem gain anywhere in the UK seems rather optimistic. But that split in the vote could ensure he does at least come runner-up.

One of those less well-known par-



SAFE: The collapse of the Lib Dem vote is likely to guarantee Helen Grant will continue as MP

ties standing for election in the constituency is the English Democrats, with its proposed candidate, Gary Butler. The party's leader, Steven Uncles, told KoS that the party was standing to ensure that England got a voice in Great Britain.

He said: "From our perspective, the big issue in Maidstone and the Weald, is the same as in other parts of Eng-

land; the lack of representation of our country. English interests are never represented."

He told KoS that the party candidate, Mr Butler, had not been confirmed yet, but would have his candidacy rubber stamped on March 7.

He said: "We are being realistic, and know that we won't win in the constituency. All we want to do is

highlight how English culture is being forgotten."

Another smaller party is the National Health Action Party (NHAP). Its candidate is Dr Paul Hobday.

He told KoS he was fighting for the health of the area, saying that he wanted to see greater support for local health services to ensure a strong service for the public.

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Past general election results for Maidstone and the Weald:

2010

Helen Grant (Con) - 23,491 (48 %)
Peter Carroll (Lib Dem) - 17,602 (36%)
Rav Seeruthun (Lab) - 4,769 (9.7%)
Gareth Kendal (Ukip) - 1,637 (3.3%)
Stuart Jeffrey (Green) - 655 (1.3%)
Gary Butler (NF) - 643 (1.3%)
Heidi Simmonds (Christian) - 131 (0.3%)

Majority: 5,889 (12%)

2005

Ann Widdecombe (Con) - 25,670 (52.7 per cent)
Elizabeth Breeze (Lab) - 10,814 (22.2 per cent)
Mark Corney (Lib Dem) - 10,808 (22.2 per cent)
Anthony Robertson (Ukip) - 1,463 (3 per cent)

Majority: 14,856 (30.5 per cent)

GREEN:

Hopeful
Hannah
Patton



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Why Mars colony trip is 'doomed to failure'

With space travel back on the agenda, is enthusiasm over a planned visit to Mars misplaced? Two experts believe it is...

THE atmospheric pressure will boil your eyes. The intense radiation will deform your children. The journey there will rot your bones... and you probably won't survive it anyway.

But after the recent announcement of plans to start a colony on Mars (as reported in KoS last week), interest in reaching the Red Planet has been ignited once again. Despite – or perhaps because of – the dangers.

But two top Kent science teachers say they believe the mission is doomed to failure, with one describing the idea as "horrific".

The Dutch not-for-profit organisation Mars One intends to send humans to live on the planet within ten years with a shortlist of 100 candidates unveiled two weeks ago.

Among them are school lab technician Alison Rigby, 35, from Beckenham, and former University of Kent student Maggie Lieu, 24.

They were among 200,000 applicants apparently happy to have a one-way trip to Mars, safe in the knowledge there is no prospect of return.

Funding for the project will come,

in part at least, from the rights to film their progress in what seems like a fanciful reality TV show.

So what would life on Mars be like? According to Kent physics teacher Becky Parker, Mars – average temperature -62C – is "not very hospitable".

But she says the explorers will be lucky if they even survive the seven-month journey, about 24 to 25 million miles, depending on where the planet is in its cycle of orbit.

"Getting there will be incredibly dangerous," says Mrs Parker, who is director of the Langton Star Centre at Simon Langton Boys' School in Canterbury. Widely respected, she has been made an MBE for her contributions to education and science.

"To get to Mars you have to get through the Van Allen radiation belts – a whole area where there are lots of high-energy particles which are going to bash into you, punch through your skin and cause damage.

"When they went to the Moon, they were incredibly lucky as they managed to miss huge eruptions of particles from the Sun. If they had been hit they would have been fried."

With just 20 cubic metres of living space per astronaut, life on the spaceship will not exactly be roomy. And that's not all.

"Their bones will degrade on the journey – weightlessness means you don't have to support your weight against gravity, so your bones start to crumble," Mrs Parker said.

"So you have to do loads of exercise – but they won't be able to walk around.

"Your sleep patterns get messed up when you don't have any distinction between day and night, and it is very difficult to work out how they are going to carry the weight of seven months' supply of food.

"And what if someone suddenly develops appendicitis? Do you send a surgeon? How are they going to look after people?"

Gary Linney, a chemistry and former physics lecturer, who works at MidKent College, agreed the journey would be troublesome.

"Most of the radiation you find in space is pretty well able to get through most protective things," he said.

"There is also the possibility of run-

ning into asteroid debris which could puncture the hull of the spacecraft.

"A doctor could be included in the crew, along with certain drugs, but conditions would be very primitive."

And once they've landed, life on Mars won't be much better.

The planet's atmosphere is mostly carbon dioxide – which is present in the Earth's atmosphere in small quantities, but is toxic in high concentrations. The oxygen which living things on Earth need to breathe is only present in negligible quantities.

The atmosphere is also very thin. And that, says Mr Linney, is an even bigger problem than not being able to breathe.

"Carbon dioxide is not only the wrong gas, the atmospheric pressure is too low," he said.

"You would have to breathe through a pressurised suit, or the drop in pressure would probably be the killer. Your blood would vaporise and your body would explode. Prob-

ably the first places to go would be your lungs and eyes."

The thin atmosphere means the explorers will still need protection from radiation, which will mean living under permanent protection.

"It would be like sitting in an X-ray machine for high amounts of time," Mrs Parker said.

"You can't see the radiation, so it's not so obvious, but it messes up your DNA – and if people are going to have babies, what if they have terrible defects from all the radiation?"



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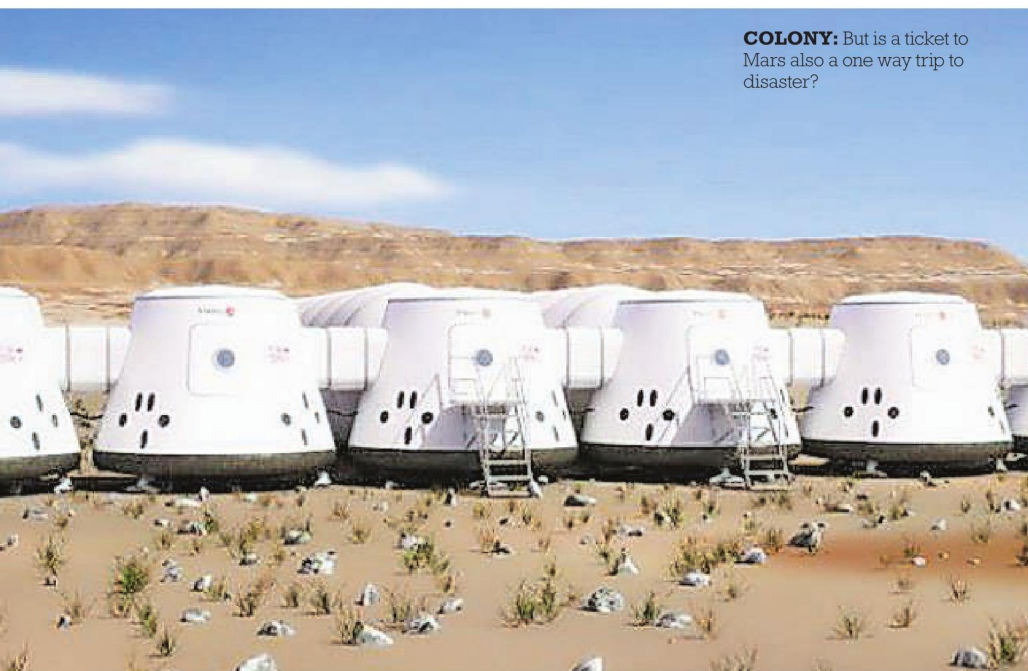
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COLONY: But is a ticket to Mars also a one way trip to disaster?



MYSTERY: We remain fascinated with the Red Planet

"They are going to have to build a whole system to protect themselves, with some kind of mechanism for generating oxygen, but they haven't got long to establish that. And they will have been in a box for seven months, and they are likely to be weak, so how would they have the strength to do it?"

As well as food for the journey, the astronauts will have to take something to sustain them when they get there, as there are no known life forms there.

This would probably involve growing plants in a protected atmosphere – which, in turn, would help to generate oxygen.

"They would need to build a self-contained dome, which is a lot of building and a lot of material," said Mr Linney.

"You would have to have a mini-Earth. But the plants would have to be supplied with food, and the dome would have to be proofed against meteorites, or if one struck all the air would escape in a few seconds.

"The temperatures are also much lower there. It would be like living in Arctic conditions without the blizzards and snowstorms. And where is their energy supply going to come from?"

Both experts believe the mission to be a non-starter.

"It horrifies me. I don't know whether they have considered the safety of everyone involved seriously enough," Mrs Parker said.

"NASA has very strict conditions and I am not sure whether the people taking these missions have the same

strict requirements. A lot of my pupils have asked if it is a hoax.

"I'd advise anyone who wanted to go to wait until they can go with NASA, who have fantastic experience and are very careful with their astronauts' health.

"They are thinking at least 20 years."

But she says she does see advantages to the exploration.

"What would be most exciting would be if you started digging about and you found microbes," she said.

"It would be interesting to see the stars from a different angle, and to see the Earth as just one ball, and on that ball are all the people who have lived, loved, fought ridiculous battles, whatever."

Mr Linney concluded: "With so many problems, I can't see any way in which a human colony could ever hope to survive. It's just a question of how long they can eke out their existence, though good luck to them all the same. They may pave the way for more successful missions in the future."

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PRIZED: You may be surprised of Kent's links to Audrey Hepburn and Marlon Brando

County's top 10 links to the magic of the Oscars

From winners to nominees, Molly Kersey looks at the Kent roots of Academy Award hits

LAST weekend saw the annual display of Hollywood glitz and glamour as the Academy Awards were held in Los Angeles to celebrate the achievement of the last year in the movie industry.

But although it may seem a world away, Kent has been well represented over the years, winning some of the most in-demand awards.

We take a look back at ten of the best of the county's talents who bagged an Oscar...or at least were nominated.



Who: Arnold Schwartzman
When: 1981
Category: Best documentary

Arnold Schwartzman, who grew up in Margate, was awarded the best documentary Oscar in 1981 for *Genocide*, which chronicled the horrors of the Holocaust through newsreels, photographs and montages.

It was co-produced by the Simon Wiesenthal Center - a museum focusing on racism in America and the history of the Holocaust.

"It wasn't a subject that I knew much about to begin with, I was actually invited

and recommended to make it," Mr Schwartzman, who now lives in Hollywood, explained.

"It was a big learning curve and my wife, who was an expert in visual research on the Second World War, and I went to archives all over Europe.

"I was very fortunate in finding Sir Martin Gilbert, who wrote Winston Churchill's biography. He wrote the script for me, then we recruited Elizabeth Taylor and Orson Welles to narrate the film, so I had extremely good ingredients, I had all the elements working for me."

Who: Andrea Arnold
When: 2004
Category: Best live action short film



Andrea Arnold, who grew up in Dartford, won the Oscar for best live action short film for *Wasp* in 2004.

A one-time children's presenter, she is known for writing dark stories about human experience.

The 26-minute film depicts the struggles of single mother Zoe, played by Natalie Press, who is bringing up four children alone as well as pursuing a relationship with an ex-boyfriend, a role taken on by Danny Dyer.

Worried that he won't want to be with her, she lies and tells him she is just babysitting the four children when he asks her on a date.

Ms Arnold's home town of Dartford provided the setting for the film, which was commissioned by the UK Film Council and Channel 4. In her early years, she appeared in children's TV show *No 73*, filmed in Maidstone, which also featured the likes of Sandi Toksvig.

Who: Audrey Hepburn
When: 1954
Category: Best actress



Iconic actress Audrey Hepburn received the Academy Award for best actress for her role as a royal princess in *Roman Holiday*.

The 1953 romantic comedy follows the adventures of Ann, played by Ms Hepburn, a crown princess who is out seeing Rome on her own.

She meets a reporter, played by Gregory Peck, who offers to show her around.

The film, directed and produced by William Wyler, also won awards for the screenplay and costume design.

It really took off, earning an estimated \$3m at the American box office during its first year of release - a huge amount back then.

Ms Hepburn spent some of her early childhood in Elham, near Dover.

Just before the Second World War she lived in Orchard Cottage with a Mr and Mrs Butcher, and went to two schools in the area. Her family moved to Holland when war broke out believing it would be a safer country.

Who: Daniel Day-Lewis
When: 1990, 2008, 2013.
Category: Best actor

One of the most acclaimed actors of his generation, Daniel Day-Lewis has scooped three Academy Awards for best actor.

He was awarded for his portrayals of Christy Brown in *My Left Foot* in 1990, Daniel Plainview in *There Will Be Blood* in 2008 and Ab-

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raham Lincoln in Lincoln in 2013, making him the only man in history to have received three wins in the lead actor category.

He spent some of his younger years in the county, although not particularly happy ones.

In 1968 he was sent to the independent Sevenoaks School as a boarder, when his parents thought his behaviour was too disorderly.

He was there for two years, and reportedly 'detested' it and he was later transferred to another independent school in Hampshire.

Who: Paul Greengrass
When: 2007
Category: Best director

Film director, screenwriter and former journalist Paul Greengrass received an Oscar nomination for United 93 in 2006.

The hard-hitting film gives a real time account of the events on United Flight 93, a passenger flight which was one of the planes hijacked by al-Qaeda on 9/11.

The plane crashed near Shanksville after a brave attempt by some of the passengers to regain control of the plane, killing all 44 people aboard including the four hijackers.

The actions taken by those passengers helped to stop the plane from reaching its intended target; believed to have been either the White House or the Capitol Building.

Although he left empty handed, Mr Greengrass has enjoyed a successful career in film.

He has strong links to Kent. He was educated at Gravesend Grammar School and attended Sevenoaks School.

He lent his name to Gravesend's main cinema screen in The Woodville and returned to the town last year for a screening of Captain Phillips and a question and answer session about his career.

Who: University of Kent graduates
When: 2014
Category: Best visual effects

A group of University of Kent graduates contributed to work that helped secure a best visual effects Oscar for Gravity.

Sandra Bullock plays the lead in the film, Dr Ryan Stone - a medical engineer on her first shuttle mission when disaster strikes, leaving her stranded in space.

The graduates, who studied at the university's school of engineering and digital arts for degrees in multimedia, technology and design, all work for visual effects company Framestone, which produced a lot of what appears on the screen during the film.

Liam Russell, Christopher Johnston, Steve Hardy, El Suliman, Adam Ward and Mark Milena all contributed to the ground-breaking post-production work.

This included realistically inserting Sandra Bullock and George Clooney faces into the 'universe' - which in most scenes are the only elements not computer generated.

Masters in computer animation, graduates James Harmer, Guo Kun Pan, James Parsons, and Bernard Wicksteed are also credited for their work on the film.

Alongside Liam Russell and El Suliman, these graduates progressed from the undergraduate programme at Kent.

opposite Michael Caine and Jane Horrocks, playing the role of a domineering yet desperate fish factory worker.

Her performance, which saw her cast against type, received rave reviews. The film was a success and she was Oscar nominated the following year.

Even though she didn't win, it has done little to impact on the nation's affection for her. She has most recently portrayed a tough detective in ITV drama Vera.



Who: Marlon Brando
When: 1973
Category: Best actor

Marlon Brando caused a storm when he refused the Hollywood honour in 1973.

He was awarded best actor for his role as the original Don in The Godfather - the hit portrayal of a 1940s New York mafia family which grossed some \$135m

worldwide.

He boycotted the ceremony and instead sent Native American Sacheen Littlefeather to represent him, and tell the audience that the reason he could not accept the award was because of the treatment of the native race by the film industry.

Mr Brando had something of a love affair with Kent, and he was spotted in Faversham and surrounding areas.

He was godfather to a boy in Selling and regularly visited the village throughout the 1980s, believed to have stayed there for several months at a time. In the years leading up to his death, there were repeated reports he was looking to buy a house in the area.



Who: Naomi Watts
When: 2013
Category: Best performance by actress in a leading role

Over a decade, Naomi Watts has seen her rise to glory book-ended by nominations for the greatest movie prize of all.

In 2003, her role in 21 Grams saw her secure her first nomination as best supporting actress.

In 2012, her role in tsunami movie The Impossible saw her back in the running for the same award.

Born in Shoreham, near Sevenoaks, in 1968, she was first bitten by the acting bug when she saw her mother perform in the local amateur dramatics society.

Who: John Knatchbull, seventh Baron Brabourne
When: 1968 and 1984
Category: Best picture

A Passage to India is among Baron Brabourne's most acclaimed works.

He received two Academy Award nominations for best picture as the producer of Romeo and Juliet in 1968 and A Passage to India in 1984.

At the end of the Second World War, Brabourne returned to England and settled in his family seat in Mersham, near Ashford.

He founded Mersham Productions, named after the seat, in 1970.

Despite having a busy career he took local responsibilities in the county seriously and served as a governor at schools including Wye Agricultural College, as well as serving as a pro-chancellor of the University of Kent.

Who: Brenda Blethyn
When: 1999
Category: Best supporting actress

Brenda Blethyn was born in Ramsgate, the youngest of nine children.

She made her screen debut in 1980, working on stage and television for many years.

In 1998 she starred in Little Voice



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Stack threat 'worth it' as tougher passport checks are introduced

In the latest bid to keep better track of those entering and exiting the country, stricter border controls kick in next month. But, as **Chris Murphy** reports, many fear major delays for cross-Channel traffic.

FORMER immigration minister Damian Green insists the risk of 'chaos' at the main cross-Channel terminals will be worth it in the long run as a key method to crack down on illegal immigration.

Starting from next month, all outbound travellers leaving Britain will have to have their passports manually checked. Currently, checks only take place when entering either the UK or France from the point of departure.

But the Government is desperate to accurately record the number of people leaving once their visas expire - or overstaying their welcome. So, from April 8, the new rules will be introduced.

The checks will involve operators recording passport information on all travellers and passing the details on to the Home Office, which will use the details to identify immigration offenders.

Ashford Conservative MP and former front bench, Damian Green, said it will be worth the pain in the short term for better border security.

He told us: "People have been demanding these checks for years because you can't properly know who is in the country unless you know who is leaving. I was minister five years ago, and people were saying then we need these checks.

"Yes, there are practicalities to be considered and the people at the ports and tunnel have had years to consider them and now we will have to deal with them."

Around 20 million people a year cross to the Continent using the Channel Tunnel and a further 12 million cross by ferry.

Eurotunnel warns delays are a major possibility and could even spill out of the Cheriton terminal back on to the M20.

A spokesman told us: "It will help the Home Office better manage the net migration figure by being able to say we counted people in by giving them visas, and we counted them out by know-



READY: Ferry firms are set to introduce passport checks as of April 8

ing when they left the country, or not.

"On an average day, these checks shouldn't pose a problem. But there may be on a peak day where cars will be full of families going on holiday.

"The normal transaction time for a car is 30 seconds at check-in as it is an automated touch-screen system.

"There will be a further stop now and people's passports will be checked to ensure they are who they are. That means we will be checking perhaps

up to seven people in a car, and many more on a coach. All of a sudden, the transaction time for a vehicle goes up quite dramatically.

"That level of control on the Folkestone side could lead to major queues for traffic. The terminal is very small and very narrow and there is nowhere for the traffic to be stored while these controls are going on.

"We need to find a smarter border solution - the system needs to be both secure and fluid."

Packed coaches will create the biggest delay, and Eurotunnel is currently trialling different methods of passport-checking to see which is fastest.

A spokesman for P&O Ferries said: "The industry had serious misgivings that the original intention was to launch the new requirements from April 1, as that would have meant adopting the new system right up against the Easter Bank Holiday rush, which is one of the very busiest weekends of the entire year. Fortunately that message has been heeded and it has been put back a week.

"The Home Office has also decided to exempt coaches carrying children under the age of 16 from the checks.

"We hope passengers aren't angry as we have to follow the requirements of the Home Office, and the possibility of delays has been discussed very openly and is being flagged up very actively."

The ferry company is "sincerely" hoping the M20 is not closed more often because of these checks, adding: "We all know the dire social and economic impact of Stack, which we all suffer under protest when abnormal operational challenges arise, such as a tunnel fire, or port closure due to extreme weather. But time will tell."

The extra checks the ferry companies have to do are for departure from the UK - for entry into the UK, Border Force will continue to do the checks it requires.

A House of Commons' home affairs select committee was told by Sir Charles Mont-



TRAFFIC: Could delays trigger Stack?

gomery, the director general of the Border Force, that the required technology for the exit checks is still being finalised, but should be ready soon.

Folkestone MP Damian Collins told us: "By applying common sense we can avoid unnecessary delays and still use these new exit check powers effectively."

The Kent based Freight Transport Association is worried its members will get caught up in the backlog of traffic.

A spokesman said: "This is bad. It is going to be chaotic. There is very limited space at the tunnel to do this sort of thing. With these tailbacks, we could see Operation Stack back at the weekends and holidays. Not good. It won't be bad for actual lorries as there is usually just one person on board, but they are going to get caught up in the backlog."

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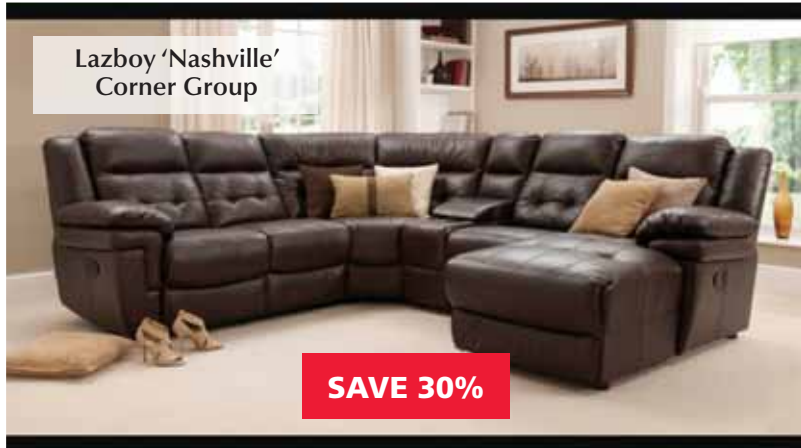
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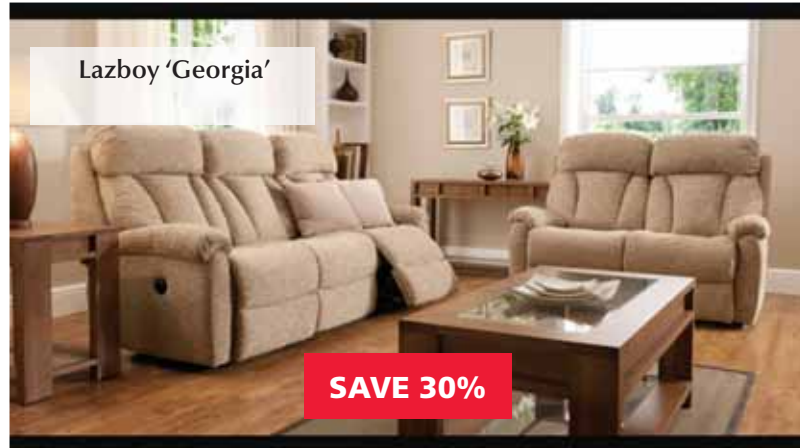
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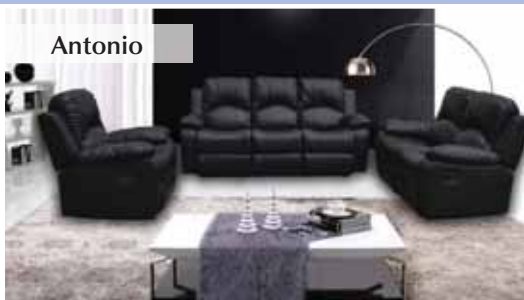
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GLORY: Darren Clark celebrates winning the Open in Sandwich when the Kent course last hosted the event back in 2011. Pic: ADY KERRY

Could golf end up paying a high price for making Sky the limit?

When the BBC lost the rights to broadcast the Open live from 2017, many in the game expressed fears it may cause more harm than good in the long term. **Chris Murphy** tees up the big debate...

EXPERTS are split over whether the sport of golf will finish under or over par following a multi-million pound deal to see live rights for the Open Championship switch from free-to-air BBC to Sky.

The deal, announced last month, is believed to be worth around £75m.

Starting from the 2017 tournament, the five-year deal will see the BBC broadcast just a highlights package each evening.

While a major financial boost to the sport's governing body, the Royal & Ancient (R&A), there are fears that the loss of such exposure on a free channel could further damage the sport's take-up.

Latest figures have revealed numbers have dipped in recent years.

The secretary of Royal St George's Club in Sandwich, is still on the fence when it comes to deciding if this is a good or bad thing for the sport.

The club is one of the Open's host courses, last successfully hosting the event in 2011. It is expected to be awarded the right to host it again within the next ten years.

Tim Cheeketts told us: "Sky's coverage is very good.

"They did a very good job on the Ryder Cup and it will be interesting to eventually find out what the actual numbers that watch it are.

"You either like their commentators or you don't. It will be a polarised position, but then it's the same for the BBC.

"With the BBC you get your days of blanket coverage and it is certainly the only time a lot of people will

watch any golf during the year.

"It will be interesting to see how successful it is. It will certainly be the passing of an era. And we'll lose Mr Alliss, presumably."

The Voice of Golf, Peter Alliss, 83, has become synonymous with the event in this country since first joining the BBC commentary team for the Open more than 50 years ago.

He said: "I have been working with the BBC on the Open since 1961 and it really saddens me because all golfers throughout Britain and Europe will miss the BBC. I don't think there will be a golfer that won't be bitterly disappointed at the news.

"I know they [the R&A] do lots and lots of lovely things but when it comes to the nitty-gritty they have dipped their hands into the money and that's it."

He added: "My own personal view is the BBC's criticism of the game is much better and in depth than Sky which is all a bit sycophantic, but we shall see.

"I don't know how people are going to react to advertising during the matches."

The R&A says satellite broadcasters have to limit ad breaks to four minutes per hour with none longer than 60 seconds.

But greater concerns are over the loss of exposure of the top tournament to a younger generation who may decide not to pick up a club if not exposed to it.

Similar blows have been dealt to cricket since Sky secured the rights for that too.

Tim Cheeketts at St George's was aware it was a risk: "It can't help, can

it? Especially as people want them to go outside more."

Last year's Sport England figures saw a fall from 751,900 to 730,300 playing the sport in the country.

The R&A's soon to retire chief executive Peter Dawson said: "This hasn't been purely a price issue - we've been looking at a wide variety of factors.

"The R&A have a relationship with the BBC which goes back to the 1950s and we haven't made this decision lightly but I don't think it's a secret that we've been concerned for some time that the UK rights have been on something of a commercial plateau.

"One of our biggest responsibilities is to keep The Open Championship at the forefront of golf and sports events

not just in the UK but the world."

Matt Pickard, secretary of the Weald of Kent club at Headcorn, said: "My opinion is that this is a bad thing. Fewer people will see it and those that do will be annoyed by the adverts breaking up the coverage."

Brian Impett, the professional at Lamberhurst Golf Club, said: "I think it is a sad thing. Not a lot of our members have Sky, but I assume subscriptions will pick up in the long term.

"I would always choose to watch BBC for their coverage of any sport, so I think this is a bad thing."

Pam Holden, secretary at Mid-Kent Golf Club, was more at ease with the deal. She said: "I don't think it will have much effect. Most people I know have Sky."

BROADCAST RIGHTS POSE FREQUENT DILEMMA

THE question of whether to keep your major event on a free-to-air channel like the BBC or ITV or opt, instead, for the money offered by Sky or BT continues to vex the senior management of sport's governing bodies.

The benefits are obvious. Sky pays top dollar - and its production values are high. Given a little of the Sky magic can work wonders.

But it comes at a cost in terms of eye-balls. While Sky's subscriber base continues to swell, it is still dwarfed by the likes of the BBC or Channel 4. Withdrawing your product from such a mass audience

may mean short term gain through finance, but failure to invest heavily in grassroots can mean children are not exposed to it and therefore interest ultimately declines. Many would point to a decline in interest in the English domestic cricket game as a key example of TV coverage being taken off the BBC.

There are, of course, some major events which are protected - the so-called 'crown jewels'.

They include the FA Cup final, the FIFA World Cup, the Olympics, Wimbledon and horse racing events such as the Grand National and the Derby.

The Open golf is on the so-called 'b-list' which means there is an obligation only to show highlights.

Others on that list include England Test matches, the Commonwealth Games, the Six Nations and the Ryder Cup.

And with the squeeze on funding to the BBC already forcing it to ditch some key investments - such as turning BBC3 into an online-only channel - it makes it more challenging to put in the big bids against the likes of Sky or the emerging BT Sports.

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**PEOPLE'S
TENOR:**
Russell
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Cathedral performance an inspiration for sell-out tour

The 'people's tenor' talks about Canterbury, music and beating brain tumours

A CONCERT in Canterbury was instrumental in inspiring classical singer Russell Watson's recent Christmas tour of cathedrals - and now he's coming back to the county with a stripped down set, and more intimate gigs.

"I think it was about 20 years ago that I did a concert in the cathedral," he tells KoS.

"It was with a group of chaps called the Three British Tenors.

"I think it's really important as an artist to keep trying different things - different venues and so on, so you can stay fresh - both for yourself and the fans."

His success has certainly been sustained. A singer since a child, he flew into the spotlight with debut album *The Voice* in May 2001. It proved a crossover smash, topping the classical charts and infiltrating

the pop charts too. The success was replicated in the US. He had arrived in some style.

Albums and tours ever since have proved he is no flash in the pan. He explains: "It's so easy for auto-pilot mode to manifest itself, but if that happens, the audience know, and they won't come back. I try and keep things interesting, and don't think I've ever done two shows the same."

Mr Watson sees much of his audience being mature listeners - something he appreciates.

He said: "I don't feel as subjected to the fickleness of teen pop culture, where there will be a band who are the big thing, then everyone is moving onto the next. I am very lucky in that way."

"The industry has become quite transient, and you have artists coming up with a bang and fanfare,

then they get to that dangerous second album, and if it doesn't stick then they are gone."

He attributes his longevity to business acumen - and says that achieving success was 'the easy bit'. Maintaining it was harder. Especially considering his health issues.

He has twice been diagnosed with brain tumours, first in 2005 then again in 2007.

"It was a bloody long fight," he says. "But I didn't want to give up. When you hear 'brain tumour', you think the worst, and I did feel terrible, hormonal."

"One day I'd have energy, then the next I didn't want to get up. I was very depressed. But I kept it to myself at the time."

"Now I find it quite cathartic to talk about, and I think the experience made me better as an

artist - you have those emotional highs and lows to tap into. I also used that time to learn more about music - I did it backwards, having a career first then learning it all. I remember years ago, when I was 18, singing *My Way* and thinking it was a good tune. When I sing it now, I have a deeper understanding of the lyrics."

The singer is excited about the new tour. "It's been stripped down, which puts it right under the microscope - it's me with a piano accompaniment."

"This time, we're going to the provinces, slightly smaller venues, and much more accessible for lots of people."

The *Up Close and Personal* tour comes to the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury on April 30 and the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on May 30.

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'Ordinary' blokes set to strip naked on stage

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THE film was made famous by its stripping scene - and now the stage version is coming to Kent next month.

The Full Monty, which tells the story of a group of men who plan to earn money through stripping, was a surprise hit, with audiences flocking to cinemas, and awards nominations aplenty, including an Oscar nod.

But actor Andrew Dunn, who plays Gerald, claims there's no pressure. "It's more just great enjoyment," he says. "The film writer - Simon Beaufoy also created the stage version, and has kept a lot of the same elements in there. There are some differences though. In many ways, the film is quite dark. It is set in a community that has been devastated by the loss of industry. You see relationships falling apart, and a man having to scrape together money to see his son. But there is a lot of joy too."

For many theatregoers, the most important scene is when the men are performing a strip show.



"Lots of people love this bit," says Mr Dunn. "When we do it, we do go the 'full monty' but there are lights behind us.

"The theory is that these lights come on at the right moment, and they shine into the audience so they can't see us. However, these lights have failed once or twice."

"At first the cast was nervous about this - we're not Chippendales, just ordinary blokes. But you get over it very quickly, and we're much more relaxed now."

The show has the ability to

excite theatregoers like few others, as seen in Glasgow when 29 women had to be escorted from the premises for drunkenness and shouting obscenities.

In the main though, most crowds seem to be leaving happy. "It's a real feel good piece," says Mr Dunn. "The audience come out feeling buoyant and happy, and it's great to be part of that."

The Full Monty comes to the Assembly Hall theatre in Tunbridge Wells on March 9-14. Visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



PENSIVE: Andrew Dunn in character as Gerald



'ORDINARY': The guys practise their moves

New comedy store in town

A MONTHLY comedy night is being launched in Faversham.

The Old Brewery Store will be hosting a comedy night on the first Thursday of every month with the inaugural show on March 5.



Film extras are required

VOLUNTEERS are needed to go to the Theatre Royal, Margate, and volunteer to be audience members in a film.

Register interest by 9am on March 1.

Email theatreroyalaudience@gmail.com with Margate Audience Sunday and/or Monday in the subject heading.

A Night of Dirty Dancing

A STAGE show featuring hits from iconic film Dirty Dancing will be at the Assembly Hall Theatre on March 6.

For tickets to A Night of Dirty Dancing call the box office on 01892 530613.



Surprise Surprise for Kent

FEEL good ITV show Surprise Surprise is back, and is looking for people from Kent to get involved.

The show springs surprises on people who have done something amazing or inspiring and are hunting for local heroes in the county.

For more details, visit www.itv.com/surprise.

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Basil Brush comes to town

THE Basil Brush show will be making its way to Margate to entertain people of all ages.

The family-friendly show will be at the Theatre Royal on August 22.

The loveable fox will be on stage with his TV chum 'Mr Stephen.'

To book, call 01843 292795.

Support for The Vaccines

TWO support acts for The Vaccines have now been announced.

They will play at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, in April.

They will be supported by All We Are and Fufanu.



'All Shook Up' for 80th

CELEBRATING eight decades of Elvis Presley, The Elvis Years will be performed at Central Theatre, Chatham, on March 28.

The production features film footage and authentic costumes, telling the story of Elvis throughout the years.

For more information, call 01634 338338.

Poignant show depicts community in turmoil

By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

THE stage adaptation of Harper Lee's Pulitzer-prize winning novel To Kill A Mockingbird will be performed at The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, as part of its tour of the UK.

The enthralling production captures the poignancy of the novel, and the plot sees racial injustices envelop a small-town community in the deep south.

Through courage and compassion lawyer Atticus Finch seeks the truth, and his daughter helps bring new hope to a neighbourhood in turmoil.

Daniel Betts will be taking on the role of Atticus Finch, Zackary Momoh will be playing Tom Robinson and Christopher Akrill will play Boo Radley.

Jamie Kenna, who grew up in Headcorn and now lives in Tunbridge Wells, will be taking on the role of Heck Tate, the town sheriff.

He explained: "I guess you could see him as Atticus's right hand man. Atticus is kind of Heck's hero in a way, they have a very close



relationship.

"He's been a sheriff for a long time, he's a trusted community member. He finds himself as the peace keeper, he's a genuinely good hearted man who cares a lot about the people in the town."

"He really is the moral compass of the piece."

Mr Kenna has enjoyed a successful career both on stage and screen, with roles in Children of Men, The Bank Job and Green Street Hooligans.

And he has enjoyed being a part

of the production.

"I read the book as a youngster and I think it's a fantastic piece of literature. I was intrigued to know how you would do something like this on stage because there's so many facets to it," he said.

"The way we produced the piece is not conventional. The book is very much prominent throughout the whole of the production."

To Kill A Mockingbird will be at The Orchard Theatre from March 3 to 7.


To book, call 01322 220000.



POIGNANT: The play has 'many facets'. Credit: Johan Persson



ENTHRALLING: The book is prominent. Credit: Johan Persson



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Why the secret to making winning food is love

Masterchef winner Shelina Permalloo talks about food, family, and how her passion inspires her...

MASTERCHEF judges John Torode and Gregg Wallace aren't known for getting emotional on screen. But 2012 contestant Shelina Permalloo's Mauritian-inspired cooking left the firm but fair pair all a-flutter. First, there was Torode, who welled up after tasting Permalloo's exotic deep-fried soft shell crab. "He had tears in his eyes; I think he said he'd come home," former charity worker Permalloo recalls. "It was one of those turnaround moments, when I realised you shouldn't fake what it is that you love, and if you love what you cook, other people love it too."

Born in Southampton to Mauritian parents, Permalloo has been

busy with two cookbooks, restaurant work and roadshows since her win.

Her latest project is the Love Your Freezer campaign with Sainsbury's, which aims to inspire families to get the most from their freezers.

"Frozen food doesn't have to be the breadcrumb, heavy things that people typically think of. It can be light, fresh, and perfect for winter as well," says Permalloo.

"I think freezers have had a bad rep for a long time, and the most important thing about using your freezer is making the most of it - making things colourful, fresh and full of flavour."

The 31-year-old does admit to having found a few random ingredients in the "abyss of the freezer" from time to time - including an exploded



EASY: This meal can be made from frozen ingredients

bag of frozen thyme.

"It happens to the best of us!" she says. "Organising your freezer's really important, labelling it properly and cycling it the way you would with your fridge."

Much of Permalloo's cuisine is inspired by her mother, Sheila, who she recently enjoyed a trip to Mauritius with.

So who's the better cook these days? "My mum's food is what I crave whenever I've been away or I'm feeling low, or I've got a cold. Technically, I've got more skills than her, but she's definitely the better cook," Permalloo says with a laugh.

"Mum loves my food, she's really supportive. She's all about taste and smell - an old school cook, no measurements, just feeling as she goes along. I think that's the best way to cook."

Permalloo is also proud aunt to four nephews, who range in age from one to nine.

"All the kids love getting involved in food, they get really excited. If they can be involved in the process, they want to eat it," she says.

"Kiran, who's seven, is a little foodie. I can definitely imagine him being the next judge on MasterChef - he's very, very shrewd with his words."

Permalloo admits it's been "an incredible couple of years" since she picked up her MasterChef trophy.

However, even though some "really great experiences" have come her way, "don't ever forget where you came from", she adds.

"Being close to the family for me is what food was always about. I can't live without them at all."

Wallace and Gromit

MUCH-LOVED TV and film characters Wallace and Gromit will be joined by the likes of Shaun the Sheep at the multi-billion pound London Paramount Resort, due to be built on a former cement works on the Swanscombe peninsula.

The company behind the ambitious project has confirmed a licence deal has been agreed to feature the characters when the park opens in Easter 2020.

Blur tickets are on sale

TICKETS for Blur's reunion in Hyde Park on June 20, featuring Kent guitarist Graham Coxon, are now on sale.

Coxon, who lives near Canterbury, will be returning to the Blur fold in preparation for the band's first new album in 12 years.

He quit the band during the recording of 2003's Think Tank before reuniting for various live performances since.

General admission will be £88.

Wine tour and high tea

A wine tour and high tea will be offered at the Hush Heath Estate in Staplehurst on March 14 and 15.

Celebrating Mother's Day, all Mums will be treated to a glass of Balfour Brut Rose on arrival, followed by a guided tour of the winery and a high tea.

Tours must be pre-booked in advance.

For more details, visit www.hushheath.com or call 01622 832794.

Film festival on its way

THE international Banff Mountain Film Festival will be bringing big screen adventure to Tunbridge Wells.

The festival will be held at the Assembly Hall Theatre on March 4 as part of its tour of the UK.

Each film will feature stories of inspirational real-life characters and they are ideal for people with a spirit of adventure and a love of travel.

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Not just meatballs in Scandinavia

TRAVEL REVIEW: Scandi

By Karen Bowerman

FOR the guy that's the equivalent of Gordon Ramsay in the Danish version of Hell's Kitchen, chef Wassim Hallal seems a surprisingly agreeable chap.

Hallal runs the city's upmarket Restaurant Frederikshøj.

"At first, I just wanted to create high-end dishes," he says. "But now I want to show that simple food can also taste great, as long as it's made with good ingredients."

Focusing on fresh, seasonal produce is at the heart of New Nordic Cuisine.

Using organic, regional ingredients is also the aim of Nordisk Spisehus, where Bill and I have dinner. The restaurant serves signature dishes from Michelin-starred establishments. I find the concept a little bewildering (shouldn't a restaurant be defined by its own menu?) but it seems chef David Johansen, from Copenhagen's one-starred Kokkeriet, is pleased.

Our eight-course dinner (DKK 899; £90) with wine pairing (DKK 749; £75) features dishes from five Copenhagen restaurants.

Among them is Clou's salt and sugar cured scallop, topped with tiny discs of crispy rye bread and dried seaweed, and Kadeau's squid in shrimp emulsion.

I leave, wondering if Nordisk needs to be more courageous. Given its dishes seem to hold their own in a Michelin-starred menu, does the kitchen really need to rely so heavily on the creativity of others?

The next morning Bill and I catch a ferry to Sweden's west coast city of Gothenburg – we're heading to the Fish Church, a 19th-century fish market in a building inspired by Norway's wooden stave churches that



DELICIOUS: The 'fish church' - making food a religious experience

were built without pillars.

On a mezzanine at the far end of the market is Gabriel, where we're having lunch. It's run by chef Johan Malm, who won the World Oyster Opening Championships in 2010. We eat sumptuously; fresh oysters from Grebbestad (two hours north of Gothenburg), the thickest of fish soups with sweet prawns and fish that's almost al dente, and grilled

plaice with browned butter and potatoes.

"I kept it simple," Malm says. "to let the quality of the ingredients shine through."

It's quality again at the city's new Koka restaurant, the latest venture from Michelin-starred chef Bjorn Persson.

For 14 years he ran the multi-award winning Kock & Vin. Then,

listening to customers' requests for more affordable fine dining, he closed it down and opened Koka in the same premises, winning a best restaurant in Sweden award last year.

Our five course dinner (SEK 680; £54) with wine pairing (SEK 600; £48) includes Swedish crab on a mound of leek puree, and pork belly with Brussels sprouts and grated walnut.

TRAVEL FACTS

■ Karen Bowerman was a guest of the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian tourist boards. For more information, visit www.visitdenmark.co.uk, www.visitsweden.com and www.visitnorway.com

By the time we reach Tromsø, in North Norway, we're glad of a "lighter" supper. We have "just three" courses from the a la carte menu at Fiskekompaniet, a restaurant overlooking the harbour, but then get carried away with the wine.

I enjoy ravioli filled with served in a blue mussel sauce (NOK 215, £18), steamed salted cod with bacon, carrots and mushrooms (NOK 325, £27), and an apple doughnut (NOK 145, £12). But it's the wine that excels: Macon-Villages 2014 (NOK 462, £40) with our starter, Madeira Boal 1984 (NOK 127, £11 a glass) with our pudding, but it's the Meursault 1er cru Genevrières 2011 (NOK 705; £60) that we can't stop raving about.

On our final day, we go fishing. At Ersfjordbotn, a small hamlet 15km west of Tromsø, we meet Trond Lorentzen, whose family runs a fish processing plant at nearby Brensholmen. We clamber onto his boat and chug through the fjord. Gulls bob on the water; shoals of herring dart beneath.

Gradually, the blue twilight gives way to sunrise. The sky turns rose and a humpback whale arches gracefully through the waves.

As the day grows dark, talk turns to our foodie adventure.

"It's been so much better than meatballs," I joke.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



IT FOLLOWS (15, 100 mins) Thriller/Horror/Romance

IN WES Craven's post-modern 1996 slasher *Scream*, a geeky cinephile played by Jamie Kennedy detailed the universally accepted rules for surviving a horror film. "You can never have sex," he

explained. "Big no-no. Sex equals death."

Writer-director David Robert Mitchell expands on this notion of fatal carnality in his impressive second feature: a skin-crawling jaunt into alcohol-fuelled teen angst that eschews the usual array of knife-wielding maniacs and masked bogeymen.

Instead, *It Follows* pits a group of unsuspecting teenage protagonists against the insidious threat of a sexually transmitted spectre that silently and mercilessly stalks each deflowered victim.

You can run but you cannot hide.

THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL (PG, 122 mins) Comedy/Drama/Romance

TOWARDS the end of *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, a secret inspector is asked for an honest

assessment of Jaipur's luxury development for residents in their golden years.

The inspector concludes that behind the scenes, management of the hotel is shambolic but unerring affection for the staff makes it a four-star destination. The same honest appraisal applies to John Madden's entertaining sequel: Ol Parker's script is haphazard and several plot strands are flimsy but our emotional investment in the characters papers over the cracks.

While the first film was lovingly adapted from Deborah Moggach's novel *These Foolish Things*, *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* tumbles straight out of the script-writer Parker's imagination. The film is certainly a gift: you get everything you expect but nothing more.

FOCUS (15, 105 mins) Drama/Romance



THE con men and women who bluff, distract and double-cross in this light-fingered drama, operate by clearly defined rules.

They perform hundreds of petty thefts rather than one major heist because there is safety in volume, they refuse to steal from the vulnerable, and they never allow sentiment to cloud their cold-hearted, cash-oriented judgement.

"Love will get you killed in this racket," grizzles one veteran of the hustle.

Focus is a familiar tale of old scoundrels performing new tricks, which lacks erotic charge.

The second act in Argentina is an anti-climax by comparison that plays its winning hand far too early.

In the absence of jeopardy, we lose everything, especially interest.

EVER thought about how to capture frost-covered holly, close-ups of pretty petals or swathes of woodland bulbs in fading light?

If you've not had much success taking good pictures of your plants, eminent flower and plant photographer Clive Nichols offers some useful pointers on how aspiring horticultural photographers can create pictures to frame proudly rather than instantly delete.

"If you're shooting outdoors, give yourself the best possible chance of success and select somewhere photogenic. The garden of a National Trust or English Heritage property would be a good place to start, or alternatively a well-maintained public or privately-owned garden," says Nichols, who runs online courses on the subject.

"Of course, if you're lucky enough to have a wonderful garden of your own, start there."

The National Gardens Scheme (www.ngs.org.uk) has thousands of gardens that open nationwide to the public in all seasons, so check on your nearest open garden and go and visit - chat to the owners and they may well allow you to take some photographs.

Take note of the weather, he advises.

"Unless you want shots with subject movement, you should ideally shoot on a day when there's little wind. I use sites like BBC Weather to check on wind speeds and when they drop below 5mph that triggers me to go out and take pictures."



ART: There are a few tips that could help you take better horticultural photos

Finding art in your flowerbeds

One of the major mistakes that amateurs make when photographing plants and gardens is to shoot in bright sunlight.

"Although your brain is saying 'Wow, this garden looks amazing', your pictures will probably be disappointing because of dark inky shadows and bright, burnt-out highlights.

"Put simply, your pictures will

probably be too contrasty. Shooting on overcast days with a bit of sunshine pushing through the clouds will undoubtedly yield better results as the soft, diffused light allows you to capture the subtle colour and texture of flowers and plants.

"Choosing the right time of day is also important. You can get good shots in the middle of the day, but I prefer to shoot with early morning or

late afternoon light, when the sunlight is raking across gardens, throwing shadows which add three-dimensionality and depth to your photos.

"I like to shoot towards the sun when it's low in the sky, so your subject is lit from behind, which adds beauty and sparkle to flowers and foliage."

For garden scenes, look for interesting features such as statues, topiary, fountains or sundials and shoot

along pathways to lead the viewers' eyes into the photo.

Most gardens look their best in spring and summer, but Nichols takes as many pictures in autumn and winter. Frost, snow and autumnal mists and fog add extra drama to your garden and plant photographs, so get up early to take some amazing photographs - ones that you will be proud to show to family and friends.



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Nightingales or easing a crisis?

DEVELOPMENT at Lodge Hill on the Hoo Peninsula in Medway was subject of an article in Kent on Sunday (last week) as the decision to allow building has been called by central government.

Although planned for 5,000 homes, nightingales have colonised the area so there is pressure to abandon the whole scheme to their annual three-month breeding season.

Lodge Hill was a military training area, with whatever buildings and installations the military needed. It is just about as brown as a brown field can be.

It has been in the frame for homes since Medway's 2003 Local Plan. Since the original plans were drawn up there has been a series of public consultations before the scheme came to our local council for a planning decision.

The decision was agreed across the political parties.

This combined effort has created more than a big housing estate. At 5,000 dwellings with schools, doctor's surgeries, health centre, plenty of open space new main roads along with plans for employment within the development it is an urban centre that some might even call a garden city.

In all that time and effort nightingales have only been mentioned quite recently.

Medway with a housing problem and a waiting list of 20,000 in a region which has a critical shortage will not find this scheme solves the problem, but to walk away from a brown field site ready for development would be irresponsible.

Yet now the whole area has been granted Site of Special Scientific Interest to protect the birds.

As our ex-Tory MP now Ukip, Mark Reckless said in 2013: "It is has become a struggle between the interests of 84 nightingales and homes for 15,000 people and jobs for 5,000".

Derek Munton,
 Chair, Rochester and Strood
 constituency Labour Party

Campaigners... brace for defeat

I READ with interest the excellent article on the battle for Lodge Hill in the KoS and look forward to seeing how it all turns out.

It just so happens I was one of the campaigners fighting against Ashford Borough Council to try and stop them approving development on 1,000 acres of agricultural land in Chilmington Green, Ashford.

We were promised 1,000 jobs over 25 years, four new schools, a discovery park, a community centre, park and ride, lots of local shops even a place of worship.

When the artist's impressions of how it all would look on completion, was published, even I was impressed.

We submitted an 8,000 signature

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Foreign speeders to finally face the music

LAST year, 1,954 speeding offences were committed by foreign motorists in Kent alone.

What's more, from January to October 2014, foreign drivers across the UK escaped paying over £2.3million in speeding fines. This is because most foreign drivers detected by speed cameras are not registered with the DVLA and so are difficult to track down.

Now, thanks to a new law voted on last week in the European Parliament, foreign drivers will be forced to pay up when they commit speeding offences.

Police forces are set to have access to a European database of car

registration numbers which will enable them to send out speeding fines to foreign drivers across the EU. The knock-on effect will be an improvement in safety on our roads and more cash recovered in fines.

This is great example of how cooperation across Europe can help us tackle issues which impact on our day-to-day safety and wellbeing. The UK has up to two years to fully implement the new law.

I'm calling on Kent Police to make full use of it so that all drivers on our roads are held accountable.

Catherine Bearder
 MEP, Lib Dems, for South East England

Land Securities not land owner

IN YOUR KoS article on Lodge Hill you state, "Land Securities is the owner of the land". This is incorrect. The land is owned by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), a Government agency.

It is quite fundamental to understanding the situation. Land Securities is the DIO's development partner, but the land is owned by the Government.

Duncan Bonfield,
 Director of corporate
 communications, Land Securities

Don't close the Glebe Way route

WHILST appreciating this emotive time after a teenager's death on the Glebe Way level crossing in Whitstable; may I make a plea via this newspaper that the crossing is kept open.

It is used daily by people in the hundreds as a regular route for coming and going to work, as a short cut into town, by dog owners walking their dogs across the golf course path, by visitors and locals going to the

beach, joggers out for a run, even just people out to take the air.

Even the official monitors of the crossing this week, have voiced surprise at just how busy it is.

On this basis, may I implore the crossing be kept open.

I and the majority of those I have spoken to, are happy for the crossing to stay as it is, while some have suggested flashing lights or an electric lock to stop the gate opening 60 seconds before a train is due.

A few suggested a bridge, but unfortunately a bridge is often a barrier to many older people who can not easily manage the stairs; a problem I experience myself.

Please keep Glebe Way crossing open; it is used quite happily by hundreds of people daily, and is an important part of our town.

Peter Cronin-Hill,
 Whitstable

Keep paying for your roads

YOUR reader Peter Missons (KoS, letters last week) may think (as many do) the payment method for the Dartford Crossing is a 'Dick Turpin' rip-off, but like all readers he should note that only Ukip is against any form of road tolling.

All other political parties have plans to introduce a 'Roads for the Rich' tolling system for the entire road network and certainly the EU is well ahead in its plans to force all member countries to adopt a system of tolling.

Terry Hudson,
 Whitstable

Protect our much loved libraries

HOW many of Kent's residents know that Kent County Council wants to privatise our libraries?

It has quietly released a so-called consultation document about handing over their running to a charitable trust.

Where this has happened in other parts of the country, there have been library closures, removal of mobile services, reduction in professional staff and decreased opening hours.

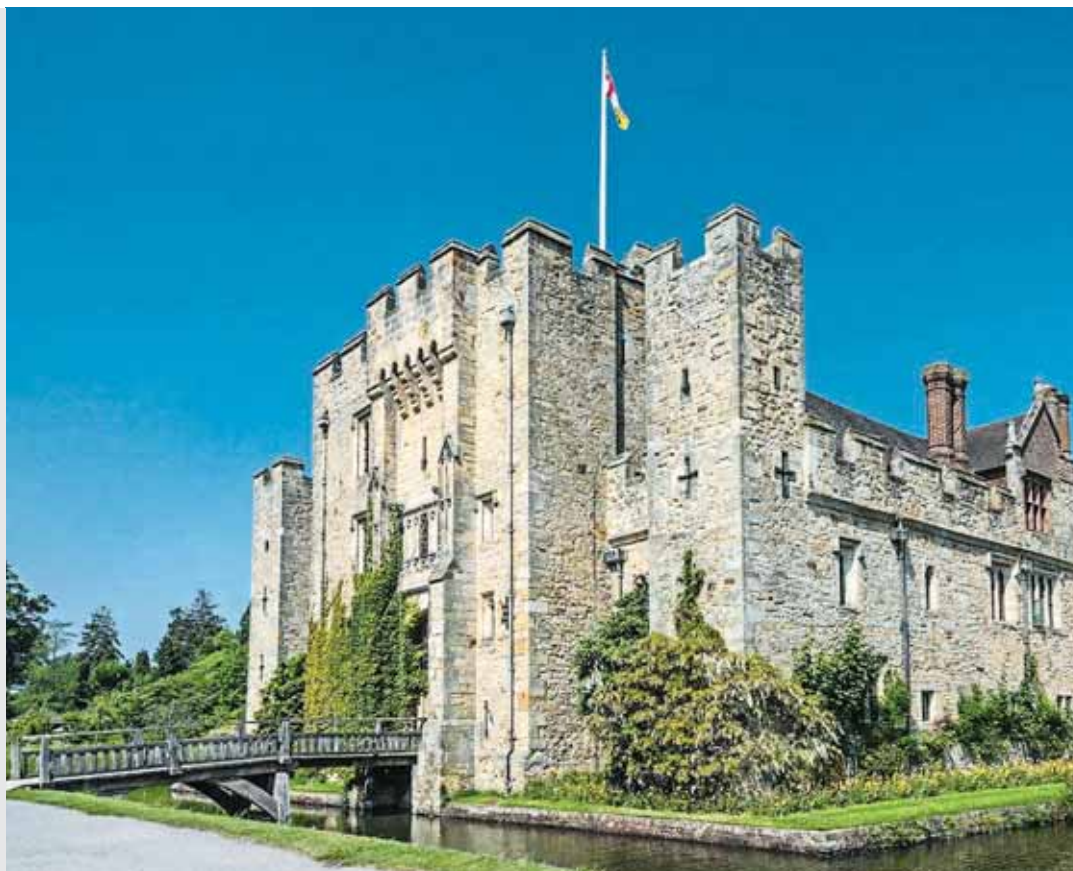
And once the council has washed its hands of libraries, what can residents do about it? Very little.

I was lucky enough to be brought up in a home lined with books, but many youngsters don't have this.

According to the National Literacy Trust, three in 10 children live in households with no books at all. In these days of tapping and swiping, the role of books in young people's lives has diminished, but libraries are one place where families and individuals, regardless of wealth, have access to as many books as they like. This promotes equality and opens up a new world to children.

Are you, as a resident of Kent, happy to sit by and let the council put our libraries at risk? If not, go to <http://tinyurl.com/kentlibs> to register your opposition to this threat to Kent's libraries.

Jane Darling,
 Whitstable



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NANO: Small but mighty technology which could make serious cash for business in the county

Tiny technology that could make big money

by **Jamie Weir**

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

NANOTECHNOLOGY is something that most in Kent won't have heard of, but which could revolutionise the way we live, saving public money, and people's time.

While the new industry has flown largely under the radar for most, the county has become something of a hot spot.

Nanotechnology is the science of working to control matter at the level of atoms and molecules.

Many of Kent's nanotechnology companies have set up shop at the former Pfizer site in Sandwich,

now the Discovery Park.

One of the companies based there is Alpha Nano Solutions, which is working to create solutions that help repel dirt, oil, water and corrosion from almost all surfaces. This could save billions of pounds in the cost of cleaning and repainting surfaces, as well as making harsh chemical cleaners obsolete. The company recently astonished crowds by demonstrating that it could actually waterproof individual grains of sand.

The firm's managing director, James Pound, says the technology is starting to give birth to revolutionary new products.

He said: "Nano is a new type of technology, but it really could change how we do things in the

future. We are already doing some amazing things, and with more research and knowledge, what we can achieve will get bigger and better. Our scientists demonstrated the almost incredible potential for the water proofing applications of their coatings."

In a bid to put east Kent at the heart of nanotechnology innovation, Discovery Park is getting set to host the first ever World Nano Summit on March 18. Industry leaders, academia and science will be brought together at the event to discuss innovation in the field, and the future of the industry.

The summit will also break new ground, hosting the launch of the World Nano Foundation and Nano Valley UK Business Hub.

Care company makes ground

INNOVATIVE home care company Exper-tise Homecare has enjoyed a strong start to 2015 in Kent, securing the launch of a super-sized franchise which stretches between Sevenoaks and Maidstone. The hi-tech care company uses bespoke software to streamline delivery of care, making time consuming form filling a thing of the past.



Risky business gets on shortlist

ASHFORD-based training company, The Training Effect, has had its school-based Risk-Avert programme shortlisted in two categories at this year's Local Government Chronicle Awards.

The programme - which has been piloted in Medway - helps vulnerable young people assess, manage and avoid risk in their lives.

Medway retailers get tasty treat

A SWEET treat is in store for Rochester confectionary retailers as specialist wholesaler Hancocks opens its new store today (March 1).

The shop - which is an impressive 14,000 square feet - will stock than 5,000 products for local retailers. It has already boosted the local economy, with Hancocks using Medway's tradesmen to fit out the building, while also creating 10 new jobs.



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Bricks and mortar continue with strong performance throughout the county

KENT and the south east are set for further growth according to developer Persimmon Homes, which released its 2014 results this week.

The company announced underlying profit before tax of £475 million, an increase of 44 per cent on its 2013 figure of £330 million.

Full year revenue also rose, albeit by a more moderate 23 per cent to £2.6 billion. The group - which includes Persimmon Homes, Charles Church and Westbury Partnerships - said that during 2014 it completed 13,509 houses.

Kent-based Bovis Homes has also said that it is continuing to do well, building on a strong year in 2014.

Bovis, which focuses on building in the south east, said that customer demand had continued into 2015, with average selling prices rising.

Lance Taylor, Persimmon's development director in Kent, said: "The region played its own part in this performance with new developments launched in Kings Hill, Sevenoaks, Hurstpierpoint, Ashford and Dartford last year.

"2015 looks set to be an even busier year with new starts planned for Deal, Ashford, Sittingbourne, Iwade, Hellingly, Hailsham, Bromley, Swanley and Aylesham.

"Many of our 116 employees are shareholders in the business and will benefit directly from this financial performance. Employing the right people to help us grow the business even further remains a key focus for the team in the south east and we have a number of posts available now, with more coming on stream later in the year.

“ The next 12 months look set to be an even busier year for us with new starts planned for Deal, Ashford, Sittingbourne, Iwade, Bromley, Swanley and Aylesham. ”

Lance Taylor
Persimmon Homes

"We are well aware of the need for housing across the UK and will be working hard to achieve planning permission across the region to enable us to deliver new homes to those who badly need them.

"We would ask local authorities to work in partnership with us to ensure these new homes are delivered as quickly as possible."

Despite the strong burst of growth the New Year brought for Bovis, it has been quick to warn that the housing market could be in for choppy waters as the year progresses.

The company says the election could cause turmoil for the housing market, with uncertainty about the political, and economic climates, likely to take their toll on housing development.

Agreement to bring big names to park

by **Jamie Weir**

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

MULTI-billion pound plans for a theme park in Swanscombe got a boost when the company behind the proposal revealed it had signed some new big name TV characters to feature at the park.

London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) announced that it had agreed a deal with Aardman to bring family favourites, Wallace and Gromit, and Shaun the Sheep, to its proposed London Paramount Entertainment Resort.

The massive new theme park, which is set to be built on an old cement works, has already secured a major deal with Hollywood studio Paramount to use brands such as smash-hit movies Star Trek and Titanic. In addition, it has small licencing deals in place with the BBC. The park will be one of the first major new developments to be considered under a new government planning scheme for development which is deemed to be a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project'.

The development will cover an 870 acre area and create up to 27,000 new jobs.

The park is also likely to provide a boost for



POPULAR: The company are signing big names to draw visitors to the park

the local economy before it opens, with LRCH recently announcing it will run supply chain workshops for local businesses keen to benefit from the development.

David Testa, director of London Resort Company Holdings, said: "Our vision for the London Paramount Entertainment Resort is to create a world-class destination.

"Our agreement will bring a number of the nation's favourite characters to the resort and introduce them to a whole new international audience."



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RENEGADE: Jeep claims the newcomer is the right size for both city and countryside, offering best-in-class cabin space, good on-road dynamics and supreme off-road capabilities in 4x4 form

Jeep's Renegade 4x4 has both the style and history

A TOUGH recession was required to convince 4x4 fans that they didn't actually need all-wheel drive to get the 'funky chunky' looks they crave. Instead, economical front-wheel drive 'soft roaders' are now the norm rather than those with full 4x4 kit.

But what if you still need decent yet affordable off-road ability wrapped up in a family size car? It would seem that Jeep – America's 4x4 star – has answers for would-be buyers in both camps, launching the mid-size Cherokee last year and following up now with an all-new junior model.

Like the Cherokee, the new Renegade, comes in front-wheel drive as well as 4x4 format – true to a World War II battlefield heritage – but it's Jeep's first entry into the small SUV cum crossover sector dominated by Nissan's Qashqai and Juke, with other key rivals being the Skoda Yeti and Vauxhall Mokka.

The potential edge for the Renegade is Jeep's 4x4 image and keen pricing from only £16,995 for the front-wheel drive 1.6-litre eTorq Evo 110hp Sport.

Even the highly specified 2.0-litre MJet 170hp 4x4 Auto Low Trailhawk flagship model costs just £27,995.

Interestingly though, the Renegade is the first



Jeep to be built in Italy – home of the brand's modern day parent Fiat.

It is also the first vehicle from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles to be developed jointly by Italian and American designers and engineers; not so strange though when you remember that Fiat's small Panda 4x4 has long been revered for its

own off-road prowess. Jeep claims the newcomer is the right size for both city and countryside, offering best-in-class cabin space, good on-road dynamics and supreme off-road capabilities in 4x4 form. It has a five-star Euro NCAP safety rating and is the first in class to offer a nine-speed automatic transmission.

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14	Dacia Duster 1.5 DCI Laureate 5dr	16,769 miles	£11,370
08	Fiat Doblo 1.9 Dynamic 5dr	48,759 miles	£5,250
08	Ford C-Max 2.0 TDCi Titanium 5dr	55,998 miles	£6,000
11	Ford Fiesta 1.6 Zetec S 3dr	26,585 miles	£8,700
11	Ford Fiesta 1.6 TDCi Titanium 3dr	28,584 miles	£7,400
11	Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec 5dr	11,009 miles	£8,660
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12	Kia Cee'd 1.6 CRDi 2 EcoDynamic	27,400 miles	£8,560
62	Kia Soul 1.6 1.5dr	14,377 miles	£7,640
59	Mini Convertible 1.6 Cooper 3dr	38,782 miles	£8,200
61	Mini Hatch Cooper 1.6 Cooper	15,985 miles	£9,000
63	Nissan Juke 1.5 DCI Acenta	7,248 miles	£12,000
61	Nissan Micra 1.2 Acenta 5dr	5,302 miles	£7,000
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61	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 DCI Acenta	12,850 miles	£10,290
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Load lugging in style with the Insignia

Vauxhall's handsome Insignia Sports Tourer would be even more popular if it had a fancy German badge on its nose, writes **Steve Loader**...

LITHE yet roomy estates are trendy – not that you'd know them by that label. Vauxhall's sleek Insignia Sports Tourer is a case in point and there are plenty of load-lugging rivals with similarly exotic pseudonyms.

But few are as handsome as the big Vauxhall, which benefitted from a subtle midlife facelift that has boosted its elegant looks, while tweaking an interior that already showed Vauxhall's upmarket aspirations.

Indeed, if it carried a prestigious German badge on the front I'm convinced the Insignia would be even more familiar on the road; remember that its launch was highlighted by the prestigious European Car of the Year award in 2009.

Mind you, that sharply tailored rear end means it can't compete for full-on cargo capacity (1,530 litres) with its predecessor, the drab and hearse-like Vectra Estate, which offered 1,850 litres of cargo space with rear seats down.

Then again, Vauxhall has the classy Zafira Tourer for those needing a convertible van, while German executive marques have already shown how modern estate



buyers want style and prestige as well as practicality.

The Insignia is no slouch when judged from behind the wheel either, gaining from chassis mods also made during the aforementioned 2013 facelift, though it is worth checking out the tauter and more rewarding

Sport chassis that comes as standard on the SRi line-up – as tested here.

Inside, the cabin mixes the quality and practicality that Vauxhall has deployed in an attempt to elbow into an 'upper mainstream' club with the likes of Honda and VW.

There is lots of space to stretch out



front and back, good seats, and excellent headroom – this is a big car for the money and you can usually haggle down list prices.

Specification levels are generous, despite the fact that prices have been reduced or pegged since the facelift, with all versions now getting a DAB

Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer SRi Nav 2.0CDTi 16v (140PS) ecoFLEX Start/Stop

Price:	from £22,949
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	VW Passat

digital radio, Bluetooth connectivity and a leather steering wheel.

Which engine though? There's lots of choice, though most buyers and company car users opt for the smooth 2.0CDTi diesel tested here. Available in 120PS (119bhp), 140PS (138bhp) and 163PS (160bhp) outputs, you'll also pay no road tax on the first two due to ultra-low CO2 emissions.

But don't ignore the petrol options; the Insignia might be a big car but £18,884 gets you into the entry model in the line-up, a lively 140PS (138bhp) 1.4-litre petrol turbo, which makes real sense with the £2,600 saving on list price against an equivalent 140PS diesel, plus the continuing differential between petrol and diesel fuel at the pumps.



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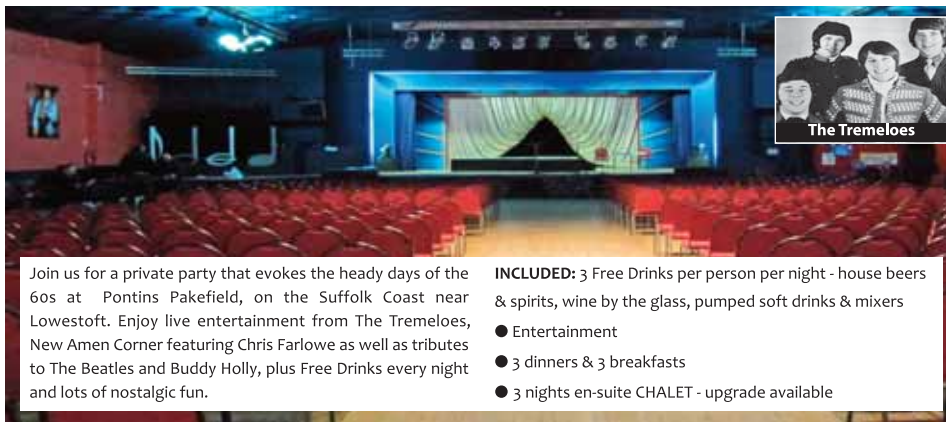
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Spring Back to the 60s Seaside Party

Pontins Pakefield, near Lowestoft, Suffolk Coast

£129^{PP} • 3 nights half board plus • Friday 13 March, 2015



Join us for a private party that evokes the heady days of the 60s at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk Coast near Lowestoft. Enjoy live entertainment from The Tremeloes, New Amen Corner featuring Chris Farlowe as well as tributes to The Beatles and Buddy Holly, plus Free Drinks every night and lots of nostalgic fun.

INCLUDED: 3 Free Drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

- Entertainment
- 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
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Each Night**

**Over 40s
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Quote US3-KOS

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£189^{PP} • 4 nights half board plus • Monday 2 March, 2015



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INCLUDED: 99p bar 6-9pm nightly - house beers and spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

- Live nightly entertainment
- 4 breakfasts and 4 dinners
- 4 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray - upgrades available

**99p
Drinks
6pm to 9pm**

**Entertainment
Each Night**

**Over 40s
only**

Quote BM3-KOS

Worthing Winter Warmer Party - Chatsworth Hotel

£99^{PP} • 2 nights half board plus • Friday 13 March, 2015



Join us in Worthing for a Winter Warmer Party and enjoy £1 drinks and live entertainment every night. The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, just a stone's throw from the sea and a short stroll to the town centre. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

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**£1 Drinks
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**Over 40s
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Quote WO3-KOS

Christmas Cracker Party through the Decades

Pontins Pakefield, near Lowestoft, Suffolk Coast

£129^{PP} • 3 nights half board plus • Friday 20 November, 2015



Original 70s band Brotherhood of Man

Join us for an over 40s Christmas party weekend to remember as we re-wind the decades and go back to the 60s, 70s and 80s at Pontins Pakefield, by the sea near Lowestoft, Suffolk. Add 3 Free Drinks per person per night and you've got the perfect recipe for a great party weekend.

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**Entertainment
Each Night**

**£10^{pp}
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Quote CC11-KOS

Best of the 60s and 70s Christmas Party

Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight

£239^{PP} • 3 nights semi-all-inclusive • Friday 27 Nov, 2015



Great Entertainment, Free Drinks, and a super location make Warner's Norton Grange resort, at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, our most popular Christmas Party venue.

This Christmas we're featuring music from the 60s & 70s including Edison Lighthouse (Love Grows where my Rosemary goes) plus tributes to Dusty Springfield and Tom Jones and lots of festive and nostalgic fun.

There's also a Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night.



INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers

- 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts
- Live nightly entertainment
- 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available
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**FREE
Drinks**

**Entertainment
Each Night**

**£10^{pp}
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**Car Ferry
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**Over 40s
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Quote XN11-KOS

By Steve Loader
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SUPERMINI STAR: Skoda's third generation Fabia has just hit the UK market

Car registrations soaring as consumer confidence grows

IF CAR registrations are anything to go by then the UK economy, backed by growing business and consumer confidence, is really motoring.

According to the industry's mouthpiece, the SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders) there were 2,476,435 new cars registered in the UK last year – the most in a calendar year since 2004.

It was also the fourth-largest figure of all time, with the UK market growing 9.3 per cent ahead of 2013, contrasting with an EU average of 5.7 per cent, and also making us the EU's second largest motor market, behind Germany and ahead of France, Italy and Spain.

And while city cars and super-minis now dominate sales due to the drive to economise and downsize, there was relatively huge growth in the plug-in car market – electrics and hybrids – from 3,586 units in 2013 to 14,498 in 2014.

SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes said: "UK new car registrations returned to pre-recession levels in 2014, as pent-up demand from the recession years, combined with confidence in the economy, saw consumer demand for the latest models grow consistently and strongly.

"The year was particularly strong for alternatively-fuelled vehicles as



FRENCH RIVAL: But the Czech newcomer will have its work cut out against the established style of the latest Renault Clio

increased choice, coupled with a growing desire for reduced costs and greater efficiency, resulted in a quadrupling of plug-in car registrations over 2013.

"With a variety of new plug-in models expected in 2015, this area of the market will continue to grow

significantly. For the market as a whole, we expect a more stable 2015 as demand levels off."

The rising trend of recent years has also been driven by flexible financing and, notably, the boom in the PCP (Personal Contract Plan) schemes that help motorists work

out exactly what their monthly motoring budget will be.

Many would-be buyers have also realised that buying a more economical and modern new car is a morale-boosting way to use savings, which may still be earning little or no interest at present.

You must take the test drive

By **Steve Loader**

ROAD test articles should be fairly objective – it's what we aim for in our own Kent on Sunday Driving section.

But they can only ever give you a snapshot or a pointer to your next car, so the test drive is crucial. Here are some tips:

Book early: New Reg is a busy time for dealers and this is a big purchase, so map out a 'test drive campaign' where you drive your chosen candidates soon after one another to allow more accurate comparisons. You are helped here by dealers choosing 'motor city' sites like Broad Oak at Canterbury, Ashford's Orbital Park and Dowding Way, Tunbridge Wells – you can get from one dealer to another quickly – but don't leave bookings to the last minute.

Don't be hurried: So, it is a busy period, but insist you get enough time with the car to drive it in all situations: in town traffic, on the motorway – or some high speed cruising at least – and on less well-maintained rural roads. An hour should be

sufficient, as long as you avoid getting stuck in a rush hour jam.

What are you looking for?: If you do get an hour and experience of different road surfaces, you will get a better idea of seat and ride comfort, how refined it is in terms of engine, wind, tyre and mechanical noise. And especially...

Do you like the controls?: A decade ago, these were pretty standard and it was easy to switch from one car to another and quickly find your way around the dashboard. Ironically, many carmakers are now going their own way in search of the best ergonomics or human interaction with the controls, but they don't suit everyone. Just one bone of contention is the modern electronic handbrake and the many different installations by different brands.

Is it the right spec?: Try to get a test car as close to the one you are interested in, even if you have to wait a few days for the dealer to arrange it or have to go to another dealership. Chances are the dealer will have a higher spec model than the one you want, it's then easier to be seduced by the car, although this



PUT THESE TO THE TEST: Subaru's versatile 4x4 Forester SUV, the classy little Peugeot 308, or Honda's smart Civic hatch with frugal 1.6-litre diesel



can backfire if it is one fitted with larger wheels - these may look better but can affect ride comfort.

Make it a family outing: It can be a painful process of 'are we there yet?' proportions, but try to get as many of the would-be car users involved in the test drive – drivers and non-drivers. The sort of issues here are: yes, it's great for those in the front but what about comfort

and visibility in the rear? There are three seat belts, but is there really room for three across the back seat, especially if one place has to take a strap-in child seat or booster as well? Can I lift shopping in and out of the boot easily or indeed, is there much of a boot?

Don't be rushed: Whether you have one candidate or several cars to check out, don't sit down and sign on

the dotted line unless 100 per cent sure the car's right for you. Chances are it won't be - or for your finances perhaps. So go away and consider options and choices; maybe leave the salesman with a reason to be cheerful by asking whether it would be OK to come back later for another test drive. If the reaction is not good then you've learned something there too!

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NX 300h prices start from £29,495. Model shown is NX 300h Luxury £35,140, including optional metallic paint at £645, *6.9% APR Representative available over 36 months on a Lexus Connect (PCP) scheme with 0%-35% deposit and Guaranteed Future Value/Optional Final Payment. Only on new retail sales of NX 300h when ordered and proposed for finance between 7 January 2015 and 31 March 2015, registered and financed by 30 June 2015 through Lexus Financial Services at participating Lexus Centres. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Terms and conditions apply. Excess mileage charge applies over 30,000 miles at 12 pence per mile. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s. Lexus Centre are independent of Lexus Financial Services. Lexus Financial Services is a trading name of Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC. Registered Office: Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The MPG figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. They are provided for comparability purposes, and may not reflect actual driving experience.

NX 300h Luxury fuel consumption and CO2 figures: urban 53.3 mpg (5.3 l/100km), extra-urban 55.4 mpg (5.1 l/100km), combined 54.3 mpg (5.2 l/100km), 121g/km CO2 (17% BIK).



WHICH HORSE IS RIGHT FOR YOUR COURSE?: the racy Alfa Romeo Giulietta, practical yet stylish Volvo XC60 SUV, or a town centre dodgem like the Renault Twingo



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Model shown is New AYGO x-cite 5 door 1.0 VVT-i 5-speed Manual at £11,595.00. Prices correct at time of going to press. *4.9% APR Representative available on new retail orders of AYGO when ordered between 16th December 2014 and 31st March 2015 and registered and financed through Toyota Financial Services by 30th June 2015 on a 42 month AccessToyota (PCP) plan with 0-35% deposit and Guaranteed Future Value/Optional Final Payment. Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC; registered office Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status over 18s. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Excess miles over 35,000 charged at 8p per mile. Toyota Centres are independent of Toyota Financial Services. Terms and conditions apply. Affordable finance through AccessToyota. 5 year /100,000 mile manufacturer warranty subject to terms and conditions. †1 year's free comprehensive insurance offer is subject to purchase being made via Toyota Financial Services on a Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) only and is available on MY15 New AYGO models (excluding x) when ordered and financed between 16th December 2014 to 31st March 2015. Vehicles must be registered by 30th June 2015. All drivers must be aged 21 years and over. Offer is limited to the insured plus up to four additional drivers. The insured and all drivers must have held a full UK driving licence for a minimum of 2 years and had no more than 1 fault claim in the last 3 years. Offer only available to customers with no more than 1 minor motoring conviction in the last 3 years. Standard Toyota Motor Insurance Terms & Conditions apply (available on request) - these will be confirmed in the policy document.

New AYGO x-cite 5 door 1.0 VVT-i 5-speed Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO2 Emissions 95g/km. The mpg & CO2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. These are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

Being small-minded...

S OARING motoring costs have driven a rapid downshift in the car size we prefer.

Fuel, insurance, greater environmental awareness, and punitive road tax on larger cars, have all played their part in turning us away from the typical family car, once epitomized by those ubiquitous Fords, the Cortina, Sierra and Mondeo, and squeezing us first into hatchbacks, and now superminis.

The supermini, and even smaller city car, account for 40 per cent of new car sales, followed by hatchbacks with 25 per cent of registrations.

It might not be long though before

family hatchbacks are under threat too from the new kid on the block, the crossover.

As the name implies, this straddles several sectors by being part family hatch, part MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) or people carrier, and part SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) and is headed by cars like the Hyundai ix35, Renault Captur and Peugeot 3008.

Nobody is saying this burgeoning sector will catch the supermini/city car though, which packs so much

into a small package.

Even the commonality of the two-box supermini shape – dictated by the need for compact on-road dimensions – can be addressed by ever more imaginative customization.

This might be a roof of a different colour, pattern or decal such as a flag, or it could be special wheels, bespoke door mirrors, or a wild paint job – superminis might have similar proportions but they don't have to look alike.



SUPERMINI V CITY CAR: will the newly-launched Vauxhall Corsa do the trick for you, or do you need to downsize even more with a city car like the Skoda Citigo or Hyundai i10?



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... but you might need more room

SMALL cars might rule the UK car market, but many buyers need more space for their family or to pursue an active or sporty lifestyle.

Fortunately, the motor industry has become adept at identifying niches within niches – where a car showroom might once have carried a marque's four key models, there may now be as many as a dozen.

The SUV (sports utility vehicle) and MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) are two of the most popular alternatives.

Rough, tough 4x4 styling inspired the former, but when drivers realised they simply weren't using the full off-road capacity, the complexity was reduced and the SUV or 'soft-roader' was born.

Latterly, these are increasingly available in frugal front-wheel drive only form.

The MPV's one-box style and height evolved from the need to carry the maximum number of people and their luggage; a sort of posh minibus for which the term 'people carrier' was quickly coined.

The usual five, or seven, seats are also installed with flexibility in mind so that they can be folded in any combination or even left flat, turning the MPV into a useful van.



ALL-NEW: premium brand Lexus has only just launched its NX SUV

Not happy to leave it there, manufacturers then realised they could marry both types and add a dash of family hatchback driveability, to create the crossover.

But not everyone is convinced by these newcomers, so there has also been a revival of the estate car, not that it's often referred to so humbly – sports tourer, ST and other variations are more likely.

This is because modern estates are expected to say more about your active living. Indeed, many are described as 'lifestyle estates', where looks are often given priority over load-carrying prowess.

Nevertheless, an estate is still a superior carrier to an equivalent hatchback and some versions even have a higher ground clearance and 4x4 for limited off-roading.



SUV STYLE: Volvo's XC60 oozes class and is nice to drive



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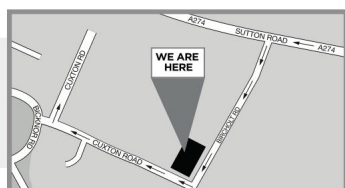
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Subaru XV range fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.1(8.8) to 41.5(6.8). Extra Urban 47.9(5.9) to 56.5(5). Combined 40.9(6.9) to 50.4(5.6). CO2 146 to 160 (g/km). MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. ^3 years free servicing covers manufacturers recommended service schedules for 3 years / 36,000 miles (whichever occurs first) and includes labour, parts and lubricants. Offer applies to the 1st owner, new retail sales only (excludes fleet and Motability). OTR price includes VAT, delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee. Prices and offers correct at time of going to press. Offers available 01.01.2015 until 31.03.2015, subject to availability. Terms of offer: 50% deposit followed by one final payment of 50% balance 2 years after deposit paid. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Finance is available to UK residents aged 18 years and over, subject to status. Subaru Finance is a trading style of International Motors Finance Limited, registered office at Charterhall House, Charterhall Drive, Chester, Cheshire, CH88 3AN. Model shown are for illustrative purposes only. 15 Year / 100,000 mile (whichever is sooner) Limited Warranty comprises of a standard 3 Year / 60,000 mile (whichever is sooner) Manufacturer's Warranty (bumper to bumper, excluding clutch driven plate) and an Extended Warranty (applies to powertrain only) provided by the importer, Subaru (UK) Ltd. *weloveanycar.com 2014 National Car Awards.

Save the environment and your pounds too

It's good to choose cars that are eco-friendly, but savvy drivers know that going green also saves money.

Many new models not only help to offset ever-rising fuel bills, but also lower or even remove road tax bills altogether. The latest tax bandings range from zero for cars with the lowest CO2 emissions (below 100g/km) right up to £1,065 a year for gas guzzling limos or 4x4s.

Naturally, anyone spending £50,000-100,000 on a car won't worry about small change like that, but most of us like saving a few quid on fuel and tax, while also doing our bit for the environment.

Longer term, electric cars may be the answer because they are quiet, cheap to fuel and emission free at the point of use, but battery technology must catch up and the emissions argument for electric is misleading.

Until we have zero emission power stations, electric cars simply transfer the CO2 and noxious gas output from exhaust pipe to belching chimney. Production of hydrogen to power our cars raises a similar dilemma.

Are hybrids the answer then?



Well, they tend to be dearer upfront, but the savings in running costs and tax can be significant and particularly for company car drivers.

On the other hand, conventional internal combustion engine running costs and emissions are falling while efficiency increases.

In fact, things are moving so fast that you marvel at what Government prodding has achieved.

Most carmakers now have an eco sub-brand, but weigh potential long-term savings against upfront

cost – if you don't cover enough miles to make the fuel savings offset the eco car's purchase price, conventional alternatives may be a better bet.

Don't ignore petrol cars either; the higher price of diesels and the fuel at the pumps must be compared with new small capacity low emission/consumption yet lively turbocharged petrol engines. And if you are considering a supermini or family hatchback, it's probably best to avoid diesel completely unless covering 'galactic' mileages.



GREENING IT: the economic and tax advantages of petrol-electric hybrids like the Lexus CT200h (left) or Toyota Prius (below) are compelling, but is the future in electric cars like the Renault Zoe (above)?



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Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for New Generation i20 range: Urban 30.7 (9.2) – 80.7 (3.5), Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined 42.2 (6.7) – 88.3 (3.2), CO2 Emissions 155–84g/km. Fuel consumption: figures shown are based on official EU test figures. These are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results.

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11408

So what's in a colour?

TEN years ago you would have been pilloried down at the pub for admitting you had just ordered your brand spanking new motor in white. But, like a boxer once spread-eagled on the canvas, that colour has recovered to become the nation's favourite for new cars.

Almost a quarter of new motors registered in 2014 were white, the most since records began, and up from less than one per cent a decade ago.

It just goes to prove how hard it is to read the colour code and pick a hue you like that is also trendy, yet will still be saleable later on.

After all, you don't want a dud colour that saddles you with a car that then becomes hard to sell on or part exchange later, like houses once blighted by one of those hideous 1970s bathroom suites, such as Avocado, Acid Green and Latte Brown.

White's return is one of the great comebacks in car fashion though, and revealed by new figures from the motor industry body, the SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders).

These show white was last year's top choice for the second year running – accounting for 2,476,435 or 22.2 per cent of registrations

Maybe it's a sign of global warming and hotter summers, causing car



WHITE'S GREAT COMEBACK: this racy Alfa Romeo MiTo supermini wears the number one colour choice, but black on this Skoda Octavia, and red on this Citroen DS3 are perennial favourites.

buyers to choose white because it reflects the heat, as well as handling wear and tear and mechanical car washes well. It also seems a popular choice on eco-friendly models – a way of proclaiming your care for the environment.

If heat is a factor then black's

second position could be in jeopardy; never far off the top places, it took 19 per cent of the market last year, followed by grey metallic (14 per cent) at number three.

Red is a perennial and gained a 13 per cent slice of sales, but silver – once a strong leader – has now fallen



back to sixth place.

Our tip for the next colour star is yellow: it not only looks good on sporting cars, but is said to be safer because it stands out more, a factor that caused BT's forerunner, Post Office Telephones, to change its then 'camouflage green' vehicle livery to

Golden Yellow in 1968.

It changed again in 1991 to grey, apparently because the newly privatised company wanted a new corporate look, though some say the switch was due to losing money when it came to sell its 'yellow peril' vans.

But, as we know, tastes change.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall New Corsa range: Urban: 36.2 (7.8) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban: 57.6 (4.9) - 94.2 (3.0), Combined: 47.1 (6.0) - 88.3 (3.2). CO₂ emissions: 140-85g/km.*

Personal contract hire offer on New Corsa Limited Edition 1.2 3dr and New Corsa Excite 1.2 5dr on orders received between 16 December 2014 and 1 April 2015, subject to availability and status. Age 18+ only. Figures for New Corsa Limited Edition based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £537, then 24 monthly rentals of £179. Excess annual miles over 8,000 charged at 5.53ppm. Excess charges also apply if you breach manufacturer servicing or maintenance guidelines or if the car exceeds BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear guidelines for its age/mileage when it is returned to Vauxhall Leasing. Package includes Road Fund Licence and Vauxhall Assistance. Guarantee/indemnity may be required. Prices and details are subject to change without notice. You will not own the car. For full specification and T&Cs contact your local Retailer. ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Vauxhall Leasing, B516 3JA. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. *Applicants must hold a full, valid driving licence and be 18 years or over to qualify for a test drive. #MPG figures are official test data and may not reflect real driving results.

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www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Motorline ŠKODA Dartford
555 Princes Road, Dartford
Kent DA2 6HH
0843 658 2618
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Motorline ŠKODA Medway
26 Hoath Lane, Wigmore
Gillingham, Kent ME8 0SW
0843 658 9764
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

#At the end of a Solutions Personal Contract Plan (PCP) agreement there are three options: i) retain the vehicle - pay the optional final payment to own the vehicle; ii) return the vehicle (you may be charged for excess wear and tear); or iii) replace: part-exchange the vehicle, subject to status. *Available when purchased on Solutions Personal Contract Plan. **Payable as first payment. ^ Payable with optional final payment. ^^ Depending on agreed annual mileage. +£500 deposit contribution is available when purchased on Solutions Personal Contract Plan. Further charges may be payable if the vehicle is returned. Retail sales only. †Up to 3 years/10,000 miles per annum (whichever comes first) when purchased with Solutions Personal Contract Plan. Available to 18s and over. Offer available for vehicles ordered by 28th February 2015 and delivered by 30th June 2015 at participating retailers. Offers are not available in conjunction with any other offer and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Freeport ŠKODA Finance. Model shown is ŠKODA Fabia Hatch SE 1.0 MPI 75PS £12,760 with race blue metallic pearlescent paint £535, panoramic sunroof package £600, sunset glass from B-pillar back £180, front LED running lights £190, front fog lights £170 and Savio alloys (aftersales accessories) £800. Total cost £15,235. Official fuel consumption for the Fabia range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 46.3 (6.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2) to 91.1 (3.1); Combined 58.8 (4.8) to 83.1 (3.4). CO₂ emissions for the Fabia range are 110 to 88 g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Don't just buy it – look after it well too

CAR owners used to service and maintain their motors themselves as much as possible, but it's now largely left to the professional technician – as garages prefer to call them now.

With modern cars also being far more reliable, we've become complacent about car care too, often ignoring faults and stretching service intervals longer than we should, endangering the warranty and provenance of the vehicle when we come to sell – which could cost you money.

So, having bought a new car:

- Get it serviced at the correct mileages, or annually, and ensure the servicing book is stamped, although many motor marques have switched to centralised digital records.
- Check the warranty to ensure there are no possible pitfalls that might endanger the guarantee.
- Act on recalls from the manufacturer, even if they don't relate specifically to safety – it will help maintain the car's warranty and future saleability.
- An MOT certificate does not guarantee a car's safety and reliability, even if it has just passed. Problems can arise at any time and must be checked as soon as possible.
- Check lights regularly for safety and legality. Get used to Lighting Up



TAKE CARE: the Subaru Impreza, Hyundai i30 and Toyota Yaris all come with a five-year warranty, but this protection only works if you maintain the service record and respond to any recalls.



in the garage or when nosed in, or backed up, to a wall.

- Check tyre tread depths and pressures – including the spare – monthly. Though the legal tread depth is 1.6mm, experts advise

replacement at 2mm, especially in winter.

- Keep oil, windscreen washer, coolant, power steering, clutch and brake fluid levels topped up without over-filling, and make those checks

on level ground. Don't wait for warning lights; it could be too late to prevent damage or compromise safety.

- Replace wiper blades. There is no point in keeping the washer full if

blades are worn or split. But if the windscreen is covered with bugs and grease, don't expect the washer and wipers to cope – use a spray and elbow grease.

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Cash price	£13,495	Finance facility fee	£99	Total amount payable	£13,981.50	6.88% APR representative	

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WWW.MOTORLINE.CO.UK/RENAULT



The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the cars shown are: urban 40.4 (7)–50.44(5.6); extra-urban 60.1 (4.7)–72.43 (3.9); combined 51.4 (5.5)–62.77 (4.5). The official CO₂ emissions are 127–105g/km. EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008 test environment figures. Fuel consumption and CO₂ may vary according to driving styles, road conditions and other factors.

Finance provided by RCI Financial Services Limited, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FL. Subject to status. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. You must be at least 18 and a UK resident (excluding the Isle of Man and Channel Islands). Terms and conditions apply. Our dealership introduces customers to a limited number of financial providers including RCI Financial Services Ltd. Offer based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Offers cannot be used with other schemes or finance offers and are available on featured new vehicle when ordered and registered between 3 February 2015 and 31 March 2015. *Deposit contributions shown are available to new Renault Finance customers when taking Renault Finance on Renault Clio (excluding Clio Expression), Renault Captur, and All-New Renault Twingo. Clio shown has optional Flame Red Renault Ltd. metallic paint, available at £595. Captur Shown with metallic Ltd. paint at an additional £495 and painted roof at £399. Twingo shown with optional Powder Blue paint at £225. 14-year warranty applies to new vehicles when ordered from a UK Renault-approved dealer. Warranty up to 4 years/100,000 miles (whichever comes first). For full warranty terms and conditions visit www.renault.co.uk/warranty

**Service package available at £199 when the vehicle is ordered and registered by 31 March 2015. Visit renault.co.uk/servicepackage



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Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff:

Staff Nurse - Ward - Ashford:

Part time Hours: 30 per week Closing date: 6th March 2015
Salary: £23k-25k (pro rata), dependent on qualifications and experience

Qualifications and Experience

• Registered Nurse 1st level

- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Liz Justice, Ward Manager on 01233 616256

Staff Nurse - Ward - Margate:

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 6th March 2015
Salary: Dependent on qualifications and experience

Qualifications and Experience

• Registered Nurse 1st level

- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Mary Guarnieri, Ward Manager on 01843 234249

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Justine Whittle, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 245943

E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer.
This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.



Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following staff:

Administrator - Ashford

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 06/03/2015

Salary: £17,088.88 per annum

Qualifications and Experience

- Maths and English GCSE A - C Grade
- 2 years' experience working in an administrative environment
- Audio Typing experience
- Excellent IT Skills (Word, Excel, Booking systems)

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Nikkie Cooke, Patient Administration Supervisor on 01233 616201

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Justine Whittle, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 245943

E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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For more information about us please check out our website: www.nasons.co.uk

Care Staff

Assistant Manager

Required for residential care home in Folkestone

We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic and committed person.

Must have Minimum NVQ Level 3 Qualification, And Experience in the role above.

Please call Miss Julia Carter (Home Manager) on 01303 254019

Subject to enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references



Payroll Manager

Required as soon as possible

Salary Range £23,752 - £27,222

We are seeking a full time member of staff to join our Payroll Team based in Sittingbourne. Swale Academies Trust is introducing an in-house payroll service and we are seeking an experienced Payroll Manager to help implement, maintain and provide this service.

The Trust manages monthly external payrolls for 6 schools, increasing soon to 8, consisting of over 1,000 employees.

The ideal candidate will hold a recognised payroll qualification; be an experienced multi payroll professional and have evidence of introducing a payroll system with successful delivery of a payroll service.

Recruitment packs are available online at: www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk.

A covering letter of application should be included with your application form detailing how you meet the requirements of the job description and person specification. Please note CVs will not be considered unless accompanied by an application form.

Closing date: Tuesday 10 March 2015 (noon)

Interview date: Thursday 12 March 2015

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Trust Personnel Manager: Mrs S Walker swalker@swaleacademiestrust.org.uk

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Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

John Lewis Plc of Doncastle Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 8YB is applying to change an existing license as follows

To keep an extra 25 goods vehicles and 10 trailers at the operating centre at Forstal Road, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7AE

To add an operating centre to keep 25 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at Surface Car Park, St Michaels Close, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7AE

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE

I, Tristan Pemble hereby give notice that we have made an application to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for the grant of a New Premises Licence to in respect of the following licensable activities:-

1. sale by retail of alcohol
2. provision of regulated entertainment and
3. Late Night Refreshment

In respect of the premises situated at 24, Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1JP known by the sign of Players Coyotes to be known as Oscars.

The application can be viewed at the offices of the Licensing Authority, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, The Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday (except public holidays) or www.sevenoaks.gov.uk. Any person wishing to make representations concerning this application should do so in writing to the above local authority giving in detail stating the grounds of objection and within 28 consecutive days of the submission of the application that is by no later than 17th March 2015.

Any person may make representations on licensing objectives grounds only i.e the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm. Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £5,000.

Stephen Thomas LAW, 8, Grassmere, Leybourne, Kent ME19 5QP
Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the applicant.

PURSUANT to the Trustee Act 1925

NOTICE is given that all creditors and others having any claims against or claiming to be beneficially interested in the estate of JAMES BERTRAM PANKHURST late of ARCHERS POST, SWAN STREET, WITERSHAM, ISLE OF OXNEY, TN30 7PJ who died on 2ND DECEMBER 2013 and whose Will was proved in the Brighton Principal Probate Registry of the Family Division on 12th February 2015 by SUSAN CHRISTINE PANKHURST the executor named in it are required to send particulars in writing to the undersigned solicitors on or before 8th May 2015 after which date the said executor will proceed to distribute the assets of the deceased among the persons entitled to have them having regard only to the claims of which she then has had notice and shall not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part of them so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands she then has not had notice.
DATED 28th February 2015
BENNETT & CO SOLICITORS, Cornwallis House, Pudding Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1NY

PLANNING



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y15/0059/SH - Daisy Cottage Elmsted Ashford Kent TN25 5JT - Erection of a single storey side extension following demolition of existing conservatory.

Y15/0060/SH - Daisy Cottage Elmsted Ashford Kent TN25 5JT - Listed building consent for the erection of a single storey side extension following demolition of existing conservatory.

Y15/0165/SH - 21 Clifton Crescent Folkestone Kent CT20 2EN - Felling of a Eucalyptus tree situated within a conservation area

Y15/0111/SH - 78 The Bayle Folkestone Kent CT20 1SJ - Application of insulating render to first floor, rear elevation, together with re-rendering of remaining elevations

Y15/0072/SH - 11 Tontine Street Folkestone Kent CT20 1JT - Erection of a four and five storey building incorporating the retained facade of 69 The Old High Street, following the demolition of the remainder of the building in order to create 415 sq. metres of commercial floor space with a flexible use spanning use classes A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments), B1 (business) and D2 (assembly and leisure) at lower ground and ground floor level in The Old High Street and at ground and first floor level in Tontine Street, together with eight self-contained residential units above

Y14/1398/SH - 16 - 18 Guildhall Street Folkestone Kent CT20 1DZ - Change of use of ground floor from A1 (retail) to A3 (restaurant, cafe), installation of flue extraction, erection of rear staircase and other external alterations.

Y15/0133/SH - 32 Bartholomew Street Hythe Kent CT21 5BT - Construction of an extension to existing rear dormer

Y15/0155/SH - Mill House The Row Elham Canterbury Kent - Listed Building Consent for installation of 1no window to ground floor on front (Southeast) elevation.

Y15/0136/SH - 15 Grace Hill Folkestone Kent CT20 1HA - Conversion of upper maisonette to five self-contained flats, including first & second-floor level extensions to rear, construction of enlarged dormer window to rear roof slope, together with change of use of ground floor shop from Class A1 to Class B1(a) office, with reinstatement of traditional shop front

Y15/0114/SH - Copthorne The Undercliff Sandgate Folkestone Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: crown reduction of a Copper Beech (B) by reducing the height by a maximum of 3.5 metres and laterals by a maximum of 5 metres; reduction of selected lateral limbs by approximately 2 metres of a Eucalyptus (A) and crown reduction of three Sycamores (C) by reducing the height by a maximum of 6.5 metres and laterals on southern side of canopy by a maximum of 5 metres.

Y14/0963/SH# - 98 High Street Dymchurch Romney Marsh Kent TN29 0NP - Erection of a single storey side/rear extension to provide ancillary annexe accommodation.

Y14/1054/SH# - 98 High Street Dymchurch Romney Marsh Kent TN29 0NP - Listed building consent for the erection of a single storey side/rear extension to provide ancillary annexe accommodation.

Representations can be made in writing either on line on the Council's website, by email to planning@shepway.gov.uk or in writing to the Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY. Please always quote the application reference number. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. Please note that any representations received will be publically viewable on the Council's website.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

† - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

C Lewis, Head of Planning and Environmental Health
Shepway District Council

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calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network charges

Or **Text.. REPLY2** (leave a space) the six-digit box number (leave a space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY2 123456 hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully forwarded messages cost £1.50 per message (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

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BBW 51, caring, solvent, seeks male of similar age for fun times and socialising. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413621

GENUINE 27yr old blonde, slim but busty, very naughty, seeks no strings meetings any age status. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4444830

FEMALE 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399

PETITE slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301

WIDOW 70, lonely, seeking gent, 70-75 to bring a bit of sparkle back in life, likes theatre, cinema. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412475

ANNE, mid 40's, cheerful busty curvy affectionate real woman! Seeks gent, any age or looks for nights at mine. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 410291

KATIE 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319

DISCREET lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409901

JASMINE, 22yrs, seeks older gent for daytime meetings as she works a nightshift most days. Box No: 445960

JANE 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days. WLTm not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315

ALISON 27, busty, shapely lady seeks fun only with broad minded man. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 416073

MARY 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting lots of interests WLTm likeminded caring, happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169

SUSIE, discreet married lady, young 36yrs seeks uncomplicated times with man any age or area, all texts answered. Box No: 4459437

CLARE 36yrs successful single mum, independent, employed with OHAC, size 10, green eyes, pretty, likes swimming, family life, seeking male with similar values and interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412053

FIONA, young 32yrs, seeks uncomplicated fun with chap any age or area, texts only please, I'm nervous on the phone. Box No: 4459861

JULIE attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, WLTm someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415133

SHARON 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049

LINDY, 43yrs young, married with husband away. Seeks discreet gent any age/area for no strings. Box No: 4459439

SLIM petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

JENNI, sensual lady, 23yrs seeks mature experienced man for no strings, daytime fun. Box No: 4459440

FREYA 33 6ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045

SALLY, 36yrs, married but husband works away seeks discreet gent any age for fun only. Box No: 4492484

MARILYN really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411871

SAMANTHA, solvent, sensual business woman, 38yrs, travels a lot and seeks fun on the road. I'm married so please be discreet. Box No: 4495859

JAN 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, likes music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionship with similar lonely heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865

SARAH 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum WLTm similar fun genuine guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537

FIONA, young 32yrs, seeks uncomplicated fun with chap any age or area, texts only please, I'm nervous on the phone. Box No: 4459861

JULIE attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, WLTm someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415133

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SLIM petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

JENNI, sensual lady, 23yrs seeks mature experienced man for no strings, daytime fun. Box No: 4459440

JANET 5ft 8ins, slim 12, pretty, green eyes, brown hair, seeking male companion for friendship hopefully leading to a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411689

MELANIE tall curvy attractive bubbly female who loves meals out, cosy nights in with a nice wine, walking, seeks professional male with outgoing GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411509

LYNN 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410137

CAROLINE blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413

WOULD you like to bounce into spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395

KEEN cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337

JAMES, 45yrs, solvent caring gent, recently divorced seeks genuine lady to wine and dine. Single mums welcome. Box No: 4459441

RETIRED engineer 67, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, seeking slim lady, 60-65, young at heart to wine/dine, friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413161

MALE seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351

RETIRED male, fit, active, seeks no strings discreet meet with female, any age and size. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410343

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

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RACHEL 39, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 6ins, bubbly, outgoing, naughty, busty, divorced, seeks male for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410835

SUE optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467

CATHY very much a lady seeks gent up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301

LADY 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301

SUSAN seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779

MARIE 37yrs slim attractive caring, likes meals in/out, cinema, tennis, keeping fit/ active, WLTm fun loving, reliable man for friendship leading to more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411227

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired builder, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

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45YR old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Home Bay area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725

MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

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RETIRED male, fit, active, seeks no strings discreet meet with female, any age and size. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410343



ADVENTUROUS male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745

CHRIS widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 5ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Dover. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409533

MALE seeking attractive female for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409189

FIT fellow, full of fun, 58, seeks to find fanciable lady for free and fascinating future for LTR. Find your jar half full. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405857

CHRIS 52, slim, looking for female, 25-38, slim, 5ft 2ins plus for LTR.

Race to the finish line is hotting up

Maidstone and Margate in chase for championship glory



DERBY: Margate are vying with the Stones for a championship win, and county bragging rights

Picture: ADY KERRY

FOOTBALL

By Jamie Weir

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

THE race to secure the Ryman Premier League title and automatic promotion is heating up for Maidstone United and Margate.

The two sides, both of whom were buoyed by successful and lucrative FA Cup runs this season, went into the weekend sat in the top two promotion slots and eyeing a rise into the Conference South.

And with a handful of games in hand, due to those cup heroics, the smart money would be on a Kent one-two rising up the non-league ranks.

However, with such an advantage comes an inevitable rush of games which could stretch the two squads.

After travelling to face Kingstonian on Saturday, Margate barely have time to catch their breath before they go on their travels again on Monday - just two days later - to face Billericay.

But the real crunch fixture, and which could prove a promotion six-pointer, will be when the two local sides meet at Maidstone's Gallagher Stadium for what must surely be one of the most anticipated games of the season, on March 28.

Maidstone have hit a dry spell recently, struggling to put in a good performance while Margate have been on fire since the start of the year, winning four of their last five games.

Adding to the strong performance, Gate have also been eager to pick up new players to bolster the squad.

On Friday, the team inked a new deal for Ryan James who joins from Ryman Premier League side Metro-

politan Police.

The 25-year-old has joined Terry Brown's side on a deal that will see him continue with the Blues until the end of the season.

The midfielder has enjoyed a successful season so far, bagging a total of 10 goals.

James says that he can't wait to get his new team closing in on the title.

He said: "We have 14 crucial games left and it is really exciting to be a part of this Margate team. I can't wait to get started."

"I can score goals as that is part of the way I play, but I am just looking to come here and do my best and hopefully win the league."

It was not all good news though. Midfielder Charlie Allen was this week ruled out for the rest of the season after picking up an injury.

Allen was a valuable asset to the team, scoring 13 goals this season.

Cricket club announces pre-season friendly

KENT County Cricket Club have announced that its first game of the season will be a friendly against Hampshire at The Aegis Bowl in Southampton.

Kent will take on the 2014 Division Two champions over two days - April 7 and 8.

It will give Rob Key's men a chance to gel ahead of a season where fans are growing increasingly impatient for promotion out of the lower division.

A number of the key squad spent their winter abroad, getting match practice in the likes of Australia and South Africa.

Meanwhile, for the likes of spinner James Tredwell, he continues to be part of the England Cricket World Cup squad...although has yet to actually get a game.

Having been beaten comfortably



SPITFIRE: Kent is gearing up for the start of the season with friendlies

by 196 runs in their first clash last season, Kent somehow managed to draw the second match despite forc-

ing Hampshire to follow on.

Two centuries from Daniel Bell-Drummond and Sam Northeast were complemented by 92 from Sam Billings in a solid first innings which left Hampshire chasing 507 runs.

Hampshire were then skittled out cheaply, and forced into bat again as Kent looked to assert their authority. But Hampshire clung on to share the points.

Just days after the Hampshire game takes place, Kent's first team will take on Loughborough MCCU in a three day friendly at the St Lawrence on Sunday, April 12.

The second XI will also get the opportunity to sharpen their skills when they, alongside Northamptonshire, take on Warwickshire in a friendly at The County Ground, Beckenham on April 15.

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Jamie Weir on 01233 653481

Edinburgh glee as Gills find competitive spirit

GILLINGHAM manager Justin Edinburgh has talked about how much he has been enjoying working with the team since he was signed at the beginning of February.

The Gills boss says the players in the squad have been willing to work hard for him, and have embraced his style of training, saying the team was 'a joy to be a part of'.

He said: "The players are thoroughly enjoying the training plan at the moment."

"The team have all been superb. I've had to rein them in a bit if anything because they don't want to come off the training ground."

Edinburgh said that he is working hard to get the players to channel their competitive energy into games as well.

He said: "What I asked of them is to train and play in the same way, and that's bringing competition to training. That's the way I like it, and the team are enjoying it."

Edinburgh said the recent good run had left the squad full of confidence.



EDINBURGH: Chuffed with the team's performance



INJURED: Evans will miss out on a place at the championships

Paralympic skier not fit for championship

PARALYMPIC champion Charlotte Evans will not be able to guide visually impaired skier Kelly Gallagher in the 2015 Para-alpine World Championships after suffering a concussion.

The 23-year-old, who hails from Chatham, was injured when she collided with her partner Gallagher during training in Austria last month.

The high speed crash happened when partner Gallagher - following her in her guide's slipstream - clipped the back of Evans' skis, with the pair taking a tumble.

As a result of her injuries, Evans announced that she has been forced to miss the championships which take place between February 28 and March 10 in Panorama, Canada.

Evans, who received an MBE in 2014 for her services to paralympic sport, is said to be showing signs of improvement.

Evans has taken to Twitter to show appreciation for her supporters, writing: "Thanks everyone for your kind words and support. I am getting there, I just have to be patient."

Gills players on short term loans

TONBRIDGE Angels have picked up a new goalkeeper after Tom Hadler rejoined the team on loan for the rest of the season.

The 18-year-old joins the Ryman Premier League side on loan from Gillingham after he spent time with the west Kent side earlier in the season.

The keeper wants to get more first

team action.

Hadler isn't the only Gills player hunting out first team opportunities.

Gillingham striker Antonio German has also departed for Aldershot on a one month loan after not being picked for the first team squad since November last year.

The striker will stay at Aldershot until March 26.

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14	Dacia Duster 1.5 DCI Laureate 5dr	16,769 miles	£11,370
08	Fiat Doblo 1.9 Dynamic 5dr	48,759 miles	£5,250
08	Ford C-Max 2.0 TDCi Titanium 5dr	55,998 miles	£6,000
11	Ford Fiesta 1.6 Zetec S 3dr	26,585 miles	£8,700
11	Ford Fiesta 1.6 TDCi Titanium 3dr	28,584 miles	£7,400
11	Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec 5dr	11,009 miles	£8,660
11	Ford Ka 1.2 Titanium 3dr	32,208 miles	£5,600
12	Kia Cee'd 1.6 CRDi 2 EcoDynamic	27,400 miles	£8,560
62	Kia Soul 1.6 1.5dr	14,377 miles	£7,640
59	Mini Convertible 1.6 Cooper 3dr	38,782 miles	£8,200
61	Mini Hatch Cooper 1.6 Cooper	15,985 miles	£9,000
63	Nissan Juke 1.5 DCI Acenta	7,248 miles	£12,000
61	Nissan Micra 1.2 Acenta 5dr	5,302 miles	£7,000
61	Nissan Note 1.4 16v N-Tec 5dr	25,299 miles	£6,200
61	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 DCI Acenta	12,850 miles	£10,290
11	Nissan X-Trail 2.0 DCI Tekna 5dr	29,582 miles	£15,500
61	Peugeot 207 1.6 HDi Access 5dr	50,645 miles	£5,700
61	Peugeot Bipper Tepee 1.3 HDi E	12,107 miles	£6,000
12	Peugeot Partner Tepee 1.6 HDi	14,315 miles	£8,580
14	Renault Captur 1.5 DCI MediaNav	16,761 miles	£13,700
63	Renault Clio 1.2 (MediaNav) Dynamique	18,523 miles	£9,000
61	Renault Grand Scenic 1.6 Expression	6,712 miles	£7,280
61	Seat Ibiza 1.4 Sportrider 5dr	22,248 miles	£7,580
63	Seat Leon 1.6 TDi (s/s) SE 5dr	24,682 miles	£11,800
61	Skoda Fabia 1.2 S 5dr	10,360 miles	£7,200
61	Vauxhall Agila 1.2 SE 5dr	16,240 miles	£5,700
61	Vauxhall Astra 1.4i 16v VVT	15,088 miles	£7,670
62	Vauxhall Astra GTC 1.4i 16v Turbo	17,410 miles	£9,700
62	Vauxhall Corsa 1.2i 12v Active	8,198 miles	£6,500
13	Vauxhall Corsa 1.2i Energy 3dr	8,596 miles	£6,500
14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4i 16v SRi 3dr	8,406 miles	£9,300
14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4i 16v SRi 3dr	15,595 miles	£8,200
62	Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi 16v	12,377 miles	£11,770
61	Vauxhall Meriva 1.4i 16v Exclusiv	5,250 miles	£6,900
14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi Ecoflex	17,667 miles	£16,500
10	Vauxhall Zafira 1.6i 16v VVT	57,760 miles	£6,000
62	Vauxhall Zafira 1.6i 16v VVT	19,015 miles	£8,880
61	Volvo S40 2.0 SE Lux 4dr	26,514 miles	£9,780
64	Infiniti Q50 2.0 TD Premium 4dr	1,725 miles	£24,000
64	Infiniti Q70 3.5 GT Hybrid 4dr	1,001 miles	£29,500
14	MG MG3 1.5 VTI-Tech 3Form Sport	2,563 miles	£7,550
63	BMW 1 Series 1.6 (s/s) 114i Sport	9,995 miles	£15,600
61	BMW 3 Series 2.0i 318i ES 4dr	21,675 miles	£10,000
63	Honda CR-V 2.2i i-DTEC	13,937 miles	£18,400
62	Hyundai ix35 1.6 Style 5dr	4,065 miles	£12,800
61	Land Rover Range Rover Sport 3dr	24,702 miles	£35,000
64	Subaru Outback 2.0D SX 5dr	2,000 miles	£27,000
64	Subaru XV 2.0D SE Premium 5dr	1,300 miles	£22,800

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